

LD 1383 An Act to Require the State to Divest Itself of Assets Invested in Corporations that Contribute to Genocide and Human Rights Abuses

Testimony in support

Hi and thank you honorable members of the Committee, for your kind attention.

I'm Sharon Lapp from Georgetown, Maine.

I'm here because I support LD1383 and I'm asking you to secure its passage.

I'm here, because for months now, I've been waiting anxiously every night to hear from my sister – a doctor who serves many members of our immigrant and asylee communities here in Maine – whether she's heard any more about what's happened to a missing patient or a family member with no criminal record who is held by ICE. Every evening, I squeeze out the necessary question: Did all your patients show up today?

I'm here, because for over two years now, every morning, I wake up with dread as I again reach for my phone. This time, uncertain what messages will tell me about former students and colleagues in Gaza and the West Bank. Are you still alive? Have you been displaced again? Did you see your house? Is anything left? I'm here because the images we've all been seeing on the news in Gaza and the West Bank, day after day, are real, familiar places with real memories for me and because the people living the headlines we read are real people I know and love.

I'm here, because the corporations providing ICE with technology to persecute my sisters' patients are the same ones facilitating the bombing and displacement of my friends, their parents, their children and their grandchildren across the ocean in places where I've lived and worked. And I'm sickened knowing that my home state is investing public funds in some of those same corporations.

I'm here, because as a teacher, I encouraged my students to follow the money when they wanted to understand what seemed to them inexplicably inhumane or simply irrational behavior. And because as someone who has worked in development and human rights internationally for decades, I've seen firsthand how a web of corporations that perpetuate war for profit are thriving on incomprehensible levels of repression of every day people, in country after country, relentlessly ripping apart our shared humanity. And now I see this all too familiar, destructive web tightening around our necks here at home.

Honorable Committee members, LD 1383 is not a radical idea. We have the right to say how are tax dollars are used – including how they're invested. It's common sense to make sure our state does not invest in crime. We must stop investing in our own demise.

Please, do the only sensible thing: enact LD1383.