

Hello, my name is Lucas Bent. I'm here to speak in favor of LD 1383, the bill to Divest the State of Assets Invested in Corporations that Contribute to Genocide and Human Rights Abuses. I live in Berwick, ME, I have my whole life, and I'm a software engineer working on software for public health. We do patient portals, contact tracing, test results, things like that. Most of our clients are states. With the software we make, states can improve their ability to provide care to patients, and they do so through taxpayer funding. And for me, I guess I've always felt that this is the sort of thing our taxpayer dollars should go to. That it's the responsibility of the state to provide for its people—not to make money, but to allow people to live freely and safely within the state of Maine. Furthermore, in my view, it's the responsibility of the state to provide for its people like this *without* harming others that fall outside the state—whether they live right across the border in New Hampshire or in Gaza. I know that all those people are just people trying to live freely and safely in their communities, just like me and my family are.

I guess that's why it was so horrifying to me when I learned just how much of our taxpayer dollars my state of Maine has invested in corporations which violate both of those principles. For example, I learned that Maine has nearly \$20 million invested into Palantir. And I know that investment makes money. But, knowing that, as a taxpayer, I strongly reject the investment anyways, and I will fight against it. Because I know that that investment is not an investment into the prosperity of us; it's not for the people living in nor outside of Maine. It's really an investment into AI-powered tools for genocide in Gaza and domestic surveillance of our immigrant neighbors in Lewiston, Portland, and all across the state. We are investing money into harming our neighbors, and that's something that we shouldn't accept. That's why, when I read this bill for the first time, all I could think was that it's a no-brainer for our state. Right now more than ever, we need to see and treat our neighbors as human beings. No matter what they look like, no matter where they come from, no matter how they're scapegoated. I know how lucky I am to have my basic needs met. People like me, and people like you all, we have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to uplift those who are less fortunate than us, and make sure that we're contributing to their health, not to their suffering. In the very near future, I hope to see my tax dollars reinvested into things which help me and my neighbors, rather than in spying on, deporting, or killing them. I urge you all in good conscience to vote for LD 1383. Thank you for your time.