

My name is Sharon Chabrow, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine.

LD 1383 is purportedly a human rights bill. I have championed human rights causes my entire adult life and continue to do so. So why am I up here opposing this bill? Why, as a Jew, am I frightened by this bill? The alarm bells reside in the heading about the requirement to “divest.” For years the term “divestiture” has been used by entities that provoke and perpetuate hatred toward Jews. The result has been increased threats and attacks on the Jewish community. It has become the norm to have security guards at our synagogues because we no longer feel safe at our gatherings. There are many in our community who are not coming forward today because they are afraid of harassment or worse. Just the introduction of this legislation is an ominous sign for our community—while it does not name Israel, it uses as its sources international bodies with a well-documented bias against Israel. A recent article in *The Atlantic*, “The Double Standard in the Human Rights World,” speaks of this hateful bias that many of these organizations have.

Furthermore, enactment of this legislation would help nobody. Our sparsely populated state with limited resources is ill equipped to embark on foreign policy and would be ineffective in quashing global genocide.

The obligation of our state legislature is to address and help solve the everyday problems of Mainers, not to use taxpayer dollars and state resources to comb through human rights reports from international bodies in order to subjectively determine which countries and companies to divest from. If the state of Maine decides to start making subjective decision about which countries are uniquely evil, it will bring harm to the Mainers associated with that country.

In short, enactment of LD 1383 would benefit nobody and hurt many.

Sharon Chabrow
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