

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

January 21, 2026

Thank you to Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Committee for allowing me to speak today.

Good morning and thank you for your time. My name is Joe Pearl and I live in the town of Knox and I am here to express my support for LD1383. As a Jewish parent, carpenter, and community builder I believe there is no greater threat to the future of our world than corporations who knowingly profit off of violence and destruction. Our world desperately needs investments in building—building houses, building infrastructure, building families, building supportive communities—and investments in anything that destroys the fabric of our civilization, be it here or abroad, should be completely out of the question.

The idea that our state's hardworking public servants should enjoy a retirement funded by the misery of others is deeply unsettling to me as a person of faith. One of the most basic Jewish teachings is that all humans are created *b'tselem elohim*, in the image of God. Every human life is an entire universe, of equal value and importance to the Creator, and no one's life is disposable, regardless of their faith, their politics, or where they were born.

The most-often repeated commandment in the Torah is to "love the stranger." The Jewish people have lived in diaspora, all over the world, for thousands of years, enduring countless instances of forced migration, repression, and human rights abuses, culminating in the Holocaust. "Loving the stranger" is an act of radical empathy based on our own experiences as often-unwanted guests in strange lands, and it means that we can never stay silent when others' basic human rights are being trampled. Jewish safety does not come at the expense of the safety of others. We cannot privilege our own comfort and sense of security ahead of anyone else's. We cannot stand idly by while our neighbors are kidnapped and disappeared—we must engage in *tikkun olam*, acts of healing for our broken world. With regards to repairing our broken world, we are taught that it is "not our duty to complete the task—but neither may we desist from it." Each of us is commanded to do whatever is in our power to heal our collapsing, fracturing world, and supporting LD 1383 is one small but concrete step that will lead to a better world for future generations.