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Let's Help Pass LD 1383

January 14, 2026

Dear Friends,

The moral arc of the universe bends towards justice -- but we need to help bend it.

This tweaks the famous anti-slavery saying, often quoted by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

An ongoing genocide, ICE kidnappings and murder, the universe feels like it is bending in a wholly wrong direction. But that just

positive signs to offer hope.

For the past year, activists in Maine have pursued a vote in our state legislature on a bill to divest Maine's state pension fund from companies complicit in genocide and human rights abuse. At each turn, the forces of money and Zionism have quashed the legislation, and it has died before being voted on.

But now, it is seeing daylight and will be taken up by the Committee on State and Local Government on Wednesday, January 21. We need a massive turnout in Augusta for the public comment period at 11 am, to show committee members that the people of Maine demand an end to complicity in human rights violations at home and abroad.

The bill, LD 1383, has been moved forward by the Maine Coalition For Peace & Human Rights, (of which MVPR is a proud member) through letter writing campaigns and a recent lobbying day at the state capital. It targets companies that supply weapons of war used against civilians, or profit from deportation flights, or use AI surveillance to enable family deportations and genocides around the world.

To join us at the Public Comment period, please click below:

Click Sign Up

You don't need to be an "expert", but just to speak personally (only about 3 minutes) about why you support human rights and an end to genocide.

Once you sign up, you'll be invited to join an online workshop by zoom (scheduled for Friday, January 16 from 6:30 - 7 pm and Monday, January 19 from 7:30 - 8 pm) if you'd like some tips on testifying -- watch your email inbox for details. There's also more information on testifying on the Maine Coalition For Peace & Human Rights website flagged above.

FYI, as a small component of MPERS (the Maine Public Employee Retirement System) divestment will not affect pensions negatively but rather will shine a positive light on Maine as a leader in responsible investing.

Let's make Maine the first state in the nation to take a financial stand for human rights. And please share this email with friends and colleagues!

Onward to justice!

MVPR



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Ashley Inbar
Portland
LD 1383

Chair, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Ashley Inbar, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to LD 1383 because it is dangerous as drafted, constitutionally vulnerable, administratively unworkable, and likely to impose substantial legal and financial costs on the State of Maine—without delivering any measurable benefit to Maine people.

1) LD 1383 invites constitutional challenge because it functions as a state-level sanctions regime in the foreign affairs lane

However well-intentioned some supporters may be, LD 1383 is not a narrow “values statement.” It is a mandated divestment policy tied to contested determinations about armed conflict and alleged international crimes—matters that are central to federal foreign policy and diplomacy. Under longstanding constitutional doctrine, states are constrained from adopting measures that effectively operate as foreign policy sanctions or interfere with the federal government’s ability to speak with “one voice” internationally.

In plain terms: Maine is not equipped—legally or institutionally—to adjudicate global conflicts through its pension and investment apparatus, and the Constitution is designed to prevent exactly that. Even if legislators share the moral concerns motivating this bill, LD 1383’s structure makes it a litigation magnet.

2) The bill’s vague, accusation-based triggers create serious due process and enforcement problems

LD 1383 relies on broad and subjective concepts—companies “contributing” to gross violations, being “credibly accused,” providing “material support,” or being flagged by third-party bodies and advocacy organizations. These standards are not tethered to U.S. sanctions designations, judicial findings, or a clear evidentiary process. That means:

Companies and financial institutions may be swept in based on contested allegations rather than adjudicated facts

Maine could face challenges for vagueness, lack of due process, and arbitrary enforcement

The compliance burden on the State becomes expensive, opaque, and unpredictable. When a law mandates significant economic penalties and restructuring of public investments, vagueness is not a drafting flaw—it is a legal vulnerability.

3) Maine taxpayers could bear millions in legal fees, compliance costs, and administrative burdens

LD 1383 practically guarantees high-cost disputes: excluded vendors, pension stakeholders, investment managers, and advocacy organizations challenging Maine for unconstitutional foreign-policy intrusion, fiduciary violations, and arbitrary enforcement. Even if Maine ultimately prevails in some cases, the litigation itself would be extremely costly—years of lawsuits, staff time, expert testimony, and outside counsel, all funded by taxpayers.

Additionally, procurement disruptions, bid protests, forced asset reallocations, and compliance audits will generate substantial administrative overhead and financial inefficiency. These are not theoretical concerns — they are predictable outcomes of embedding international political determinations into state financial governance.

4) LD 1383 conflicts with pension fiduciary obligations and sound investment governance

Maine’s public retirement system exists to safeguard the financial security of public employees and retirees — not to serve as a mechanism for symbolic foreign policy

actions. LD 1383 would:

Increase transaction and management costs

Reduce diversification

Introduce benchmark tracking error

Politicize investment governance

Expose trustees to legal conflicts regarding fiduciary duty

This places MainePERS trustees in an impossible position: comply with a politically driven statute or fulfill their constitutional and fiduciary obligations to retirees. When pension systems are destabilized, workers, retirees, and taxpayers ultimately pay the price.

5) Although the bill does not name Israel, local advocacy is openly promoting it as Israel-focused — and that matters

Supporters may claim LD 1383 is “country-neutral.” However, in practice, divestment measures using vague, accusation-based standards are often applied selectively. The political reality here is critical: this bill is being promoted locally as a tool to target Israel, not as a consistent global human rights framework.

I will be attaching a PDF showing how local organizations involved in pushing this bill are describing it to their members. That messaging is highly relevant. It demonstrates both intent and expected implementation pressure, and it makes clear that LD 1383 is being advanced locally as part of an anti-Israel divestment campaign — not as a neutral human rights measure.

This distinction matters profoundly. Laws must be evaluated not only by their text, but by how they are operationalized, enforced, and understood by the public. Passing legislation that is actively being promoted as Israel-targeted risks fueling division, antisemitism, and community harm, while doing nothing to resolve Maine’s real needs.

6) Maine has urgent, solvable problems — LD 1383 diverts legislative focus into an unworkable, high-risk framework

Maine faces serious challenges: affordability, housing access, healthcare, education funding, workforce shortages, and infrastructure needs. LD 1383 instead asks the State to assume the role of global moral adjudicator, diverting taxpayer resources and legislative energy into foreign conflict determinations that are constitutionally questionable and administratively untenable.

This bill will not improve life for Maine families. It will, however, expose the State to lawsuits, destabilize pension governance, strain procurement systems, and deepen social polarization.

Conclusion

For all of these reasons — constitutional exposure, litigation risk, fiduciary conflict, administrative impracticality, economic cost, and the reality that this bill is being promoted locally as an Israel-targeted divestment effort — I respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1383.

Thank you for your time, thoughtful consideration, and service to the people of Maine.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Inbar
Portland, Maine