

January 12, 2026

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

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Amelia Neilson, and I am currently a resident of Portland, and I work in the field of conservation. I am writing to voice my support for LD1383. It's my hope that the state of Maine can live its purported values: we need to prohibit investing state resources and MainePERS money in corporations that abuse human rights at home and abroad - a practice that profits off and spurs human suffering.

The past few years I have worked as a substitute teacher between seasonal jobs. A substitute is mostly there to see that students make it safely to the next period, but my favorite moments are those when, even as a sub, I could connect with students and make a real difference in their day by taking the time to be kind and listen. Making a kid smile is a pretty simple way to feel good. What doesn't feel good - having the money in my MainePERS account invested in corporations that aid state sanctioned terrorism that rips families apart. I can't stand to have pension funds in corporations like Signature Aviations and Palantir that play major roles in ICE deportations. ICE has been active here in Maine; fear of detention and deportation, of discrimination, of violence - this fear is felt by students I worked with in the Portland and Brunswick school districts.

As an aside - I lived for years in Minnesota. I worked with teenagers in a conservation program there - teens that attended Roosevelt High School, for example, where ICE detained teachers and pepper sprayed students just hours after murdering Renee Good.

I ask the committee: please do not allow my tax dollars and my MainePERS account to fund misery in my communities.

There are not enough words to properly speak to atrocities committed against the Palestinian people - please suffice it to say: American money and American companies are complicit in and profit from this genocide. Maine is complicit in this genocide unless we take a leading role in divesting from such companies. We have that power. With LD 1383, Maine can be a moral leader. We have divested before from oppressive regimes, we can do it again. The MainePERS team are skilled investors: with a directive from this bill, they can absolutely reallocate assets in harmful stocks.

I was proud to be a public employee, to work with and help support youth. I want to be proud of Maine for standing up for human rights and protecting kids here and around the world.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to support LD 1383.