

January 21st 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

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing today as a Jewish Mainers to urge your support for L.D. 1383. This legislation is a moral declaration that the State of Maine will not allow tax dollars and pension funds to act as a silent partner to the world's most egregious crimes.

My view of this bill is shaped by the values instilled in me by my father who was a 6th-grade Hebrew school teacher. When he taught his students about the Holocaust, he didn't treat it as a static, closed chapter of history. Instead, he taught the Shoah by drawing a direct line to current-day human rights abuses. He believed the only way to honor the phrase "Never Again" was to develop an active conscience regarding the suffering of others in the present.

In my faith we are guided by the commandment in Leviticus: "Do not stand idly by while your neighbor's blood is shed." When the State of Maine invests in or contracts with entities that benefit from genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, or war crimes, we are doing exactly that, standing by while providing the financial machinery that allows blood to be shed.

This bill moves our State from passive observation to active integrity, ensuring the Maine State portfolio aligns with our stated values of human dignity. By relying on the Rome Statute and independent international bodies, this bill ensures that divestment is triggered by documented atrocities rather than shifting political winds. I appreciate that the bill maintains exceptions for humanitarian aid, medicine, and food, ensuring we do not inadvertently punish victims of regimes committing crimes.

Financial profit should never come at the cost of our morality. By passing L.D. 1383, Maine can demonstrate that we have learned the lessons of history.

Thank you,

Ethan Schechter  
Portland, Maine  
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