

Betsy Williams
Brunswick
LD 1383

Senator Baldacci, Representative Suzanne Salisbury and distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick and I am writing in support of LD 1383, An Act to Require the State to Divest Itself of Assets Invested in Corporations that Contribute to Genocide and Human Rights Abuses.

As a person of Unitarian Universalist faith, I always look at public policy through the lens of my religious values and principles. I know I am not alone in this practice—in fact, I believe most people do this. And most citizens expect their legislators to do the same, whether they frame their values and principles in the context of their religion or their civic duty.

The underlying principles and values of LD 1383 couldn't be clearer: every human life is precious, all people have the right to live free of state violence and inhumane treatment, and all public institutions should uphold these basic human rights when conducting their work in the world.

Currently many Maine state and pension fund portfolios invest in corporations that produce and sell weapons, machinery, and technologies used by governments and groups to commit violations of these human rights, including illegal detentions by ICE here in the United States. LD 1383 prohibits the state of Maine from investing state resources that generate profit from these corporations. Now is the time to add participation in human rights abuses to the list of other investments that Maine has restricted in the past (notably fossil fuels and for-profit prisons) by taking a similar principled stand.

As you consider this bill, please remember that your constituents count on you to be standard bearers of a morality that is widely, if not universally, held, and refuse to add our public tax dollars to funds that support dehumanizing human rights abuses around the world. Thank you.