

LD 1383: An Act to Require State Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations

Public hearing date: 01/21/2026

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Committee on State and Local Governance, my name is Saras Yerlig and I am a resident of Portland. I am writing in support of LD 1383, An Act to Require State Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations.

As a person of Jewish descent, I feel the urgency of speaking out against human rights violations, genocide, and war. As I'm sure you are well aware, Jews have experienced centuries of persecution and genocide. I was raised on principles of non-violence, and I know from years of working in the mental health field that trauma, violence, and hate only beget more trauma, violence, and hate. War is never the answer and will never make Jews or anyone more safe. I want to live in a world where everyone is free and can live with dignity and respect and I feel it is vitally important that we as a state, do not invest our pension funds in corporations or entities that profit off of human rights violations.

As a descendent of immigrants, I feel disheartened, afraid, sad, and angry at the treatment of immigrants in this country, especially what we have seen in this last year from the hands of ICE agents. With the escalation of violence we are seeing in Minneapolis and in ICE detention centers and the threat of increased ICE presence in Maine, I believe we should use whatever tools we have to resist the violent deportation and mistreatment of our friends and community members.

I am proud to live in a city that has welcomed refugees and has thriving immigrant communities, and I am devastated that these residents are now living with the very real and terrifying threat of violence and deportation. I want Maine to be a state that prioritizes the safety of our most vulnerable community members. By voting yes for LD 1383, we will ensure that our pension funds are not invested in corporations which are benefiting from the brutal separation and displacement of families.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1383, An Act to Require State Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations. Thank you for your time hearing and reading testimony.

Saras Yerlig
Portland
LD 1383

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