

March 4, 2024
Chair Del. Anne Healey
Maryland House of Delegates
Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

Re: Testimony IN FAVOR OF House Joint Resolution 2 (HJ0002), Supporting a Long-Term Ceasefire in Israel and Palestine

Hon. Committee Members:

I am Zackary Berger, a resident of Charles Village and constituent of District 43A. I am a primary care physician horrified by the destruction of Gaza's healthcare system and the depraved indifference to human life shown by Israel's military. I am also a Jew who cares for the safety of Palestinians and Israelis. I thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of House Joint Resolution 2 calling for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine. As a supporter of Jewish Voice for Peace and a member of If Not Now, I support an immediate ceasefire, along with growing numbers of Jews who share my values.

The U.S. must call for a permanent ceasefire to prevent the further loss of life. 66% of voters and 80% of Democrats support a permanent ceasefire. It is the will of the American people. The U.S. should not send a single additional weapon or funding to the Israeli government as it openly commits war crimes.

We support a call for a return of all hostages in Israel and all political prisoners in Gaza — everyone for everyone.

There are currently approximately 2,000 Palestinians being held in "administrative detention" in Israel, meaning they are held indefinitely without charge. There is no military solution to this. We need to address the root causes: Israeli military occupation and supporting apartheid, and our own government's role in funding this oppression. Israeli military oppression only strengthens Hamas and does not help in freeing Israeli hostages. I do not believe in a version of Jewish safety that requires the dispossession and destruction of another group of people.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HJ0002.. I implore you to vote on the right side of history – and with the will of your constituents – and pass this bill to save precious lives hanging in the balance.