



March 4, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

We are submitting testimony in opposition to HB 1124, Civil Actions – Nonprofit Organizations-Unauthorized Support of Israeli Settlement Activity (Not on Our Dime Act) and urge the Committee to issue an unfavorable report.

We have a variety of concerns about this bill. Perhaps most importantly, the bill seeks to insert Maryland law enforcement into a complex international conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, ignoring current events and the current conflict in the region. The legislation presupposes borders that have not yet been negotiated between the parties in a final status agreement.

The bill also uses overly broad language that could impose severe penalties on many pro-Israel and Jewish nonprofit organizations, including the individuals employed by them and serving on their boards, that are engaged in essential humanitarian work far removed from the conduct described in the bill. The bill's 10-year statute of limitations and requirement of penalties of \$1 million or more would most certainly have a chilling effect on the charitable work of these organizations and the willingness of individuals to lead and volunteer for them. It is also unclear whether the bill is legally enforceable.

We are quite familiar with the complex issues surrounding Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and we advocate for dialogue that advances peace in the Middle East. We do not believe that this bill advances that goal. Instead, it sows division in communities and distracts from the important work that our legislators do for our state.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge an unfavorable report on HB 1124.

Sincerely,

Shelly Hettleman

Shelly Hettleman
Co-Chair
Maryland Jewish Legislative Caucus

Jared Solomon

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Co-Chair
Maryland Jewish Legislative Caucus