



March 4, 2024
Honorable Chair Luke Clippinger
House Judiciary Committee

Re: Testimony to **SUPPORT HB 1124**

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is Cassidy Kristal-Cohen, I am a resident of District 40. On behalf of **Baltimore Jewish Voice for Peace**, I thank you for this opportunity to **testify in support of House Bill 1124**, to prohibit Maryland tax-exempt organizations from funding illegal Israeli settlements.

Jewish Voice for Peace is a grassroots Jewish organization working toward freedom and justice for Palestinians and Israelis, with thousands of Maryland supporters.

Jewish-only settlements play a vital role in entrenching Israel's apartheid rule over millions of Palestinians who are forced to live in enclaves surrounded by checkpoints and with a separate set of rules and rights based on their ethnicity.

These settlements are a violation of international law. The Israeli settler movement works to expel Palestinians from their homes, and actively seeks to prevent any future for Palestinians. **The continued expansion of illegal settlements fuels the conflict** and intentionally works against any future solution with equality, freedom and dignity for all.

By allowing tax exempt organizations to fund illegal settlement activities, the State of Maryland subsidizes violations of human rights and war crimes, and helps fund movement in the wrong direction. During the horrific military assault on Gaza, the extreme right-wing government in Israel has also escalated violence against Palestinians and expedited settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, and we all have a responsibility to take concrete action where we can make an impact.

It is not anti-Jewish to oppose illegal settlements – to support a future of freedom, safety, and dignity for both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, we must do our part to stop funding or supporting settlement efforts which expand systems of supremacist control.

As Jews who support Palestinian rights and lives who want to contribute to a future of safety for all, we respectfully urge this committee to return a **favorable report on HB 1124**.

Thank you for your time and attention.