

H.B. 1460

Statement IN FAVOR

Boycotts are an historical means of protest with an uneven track record. They were organized broadly in our country, the USA, most famously in opposition to government-condoned racial segregation by American businesses and to government-condoned migrant farmhand labor conditions. Nobody who boycotted American businesses who wouldn't serve all races equally or who didn't buy non-UFW-certified grapes would have been considered to be un-American by anyone other than the racist business owners or the abusive grape plantation owners. Eventually, official racial barriers tumbled and farm labor conditions improved. Widespread individual and international boycotts – including by some USA state investment funds - played a significant role in pressuring the apartheid regime in the Republic of South Africa to dismantle and peacefully transition from those discriminatory government policies to a more egalitarian system. On the other hand, the longstanding federal USA embargo of trade with Cuba has been dragging on for some 65 years with ever-diminishing public support.

By Executive Order, the Moore Administration seeks to coerce all would-be state contractors to join in its personal political support for the government of Israel. This would be a wrongful intrusion into a US citizen's Constitutionally protected right of free speech even if the present government policies of Israel were perfectly wonderful for all of its citizens and residents. Because in the view of many they are not, the Executive Order is doubly wrong because it conflates opposition to Israeli government policies of inequality of people based on race and/or ethnicity and/or national origin and/or religion and/or creed – not to mention the Israeli government's internationally condemned excessive response to the attack of 7 October 2023 – as being the moral and ethical equivalent of anti-Semitism. That may be politically expedient but it is regrettably intellectually dishonest.

Opposition to sexual abuse by priests and clergy does not render one ipso facto anti-Catholic or anti-organized religion; indeed, virtually all Catholics and other churchgoers oppose that misconduct. The broadly condemned mistreatment of the Uighur population by the current PRC Chinese government does not translate automatically into prejudice against ethnic Chinese. The universally acknowledged and deplored genocidal wars in Rwanda and Burundi, and among the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians do not render those critics automatically anti-Rwandan, -Burundian, -Serbian, -Bosnian or -Croatian. So, too,

no more and no less, the objections some people have to some of the current Israeli government's policies regarding Palestine, Gaza, the West Bank, and the conduct of Israel's conflict with Hamas do not translate automatically into anti-Semitism.

Our Constitutional rights are under constant threat and must be jealously guarded by an intellectually honest and protective Maryland General Assembly. The "loyalty oath" that H.B. 1460 seeks to undo has no business being in our government affairs. Please protect our fragile but critical Constitutional rights by voting IN FAVOR OF H.B.1460

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