

HB 1394
Favor (FAV)
Democratic Socialists of America - Southern Maryland Chapter
Palestine Solidarity Working Group
6 Mattawoman Ct, Indian Head, MD 20640
southernmarylandDSA@gmail.com
(240) 258-7641

The Southern Maryland (SoMD) Chapter of the Democratic Socialist of America (DSA) strongly supports universal housing justice – the principle that all people deserve a secure home, a place that will not be arbitrarily taken from them or deliberately destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. People deserve to live without fear of eviction or displacement by either a state or landlord. This is true in Maryland and around the world.

SoMD DSA is a proud advocate of housing as a human right. When residents of Lord Calvert Mobile Homes faced displacement from redevelopment and gentrification, we helped them save their homes and form a tenant association. We have also fought for social housing in Saint Mary's County, and plan to continue that fight until tenants have democratic control over their housing.

Our belief that a home is a human right extends far beyond our borders and to the international working class - especially those being colonized and displaced. We ask the Maryland General Assembly to ask a basic question for every bill: Does it promote human dignity or does it undermine it?

Right now, the State of Maryland incentivizes housing injustice by allowing Marylanders to take a tax deduction for contributions to "charities" that promote Israeli settlement of Palestinian land in the occupied territories such as the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which forcibly displaces Palestinians not only from their physical homes, but from their ancestral homeland.

These settlements are deemed illegal under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 446 (1979), 452 (1979), 465 (1980), and 2334 (2016). Most recently, in July 2024, the International Court of Justice found that Israel's settlement regime was an illegal military occupation, segregation and apartheid.

The human consequences have been devastating to Palestinians, who have seen their homes and supporting infrastructure destroyed, along with livestock and crops. Israeli settlers and the Israel Defense Force have killed hundreds of Palestinians in a brutal campaign to force them from the homes where many families have lived for generations. Even in the past few days, Israeli tanks have entered the West Bank city of Jenin, forcing 40,000 Palestinians to flee their homes, followed by a statement from the Israeli Minister of Defense that the intent is "prevent the return of residents." The nature and scale of this injustice is in no way defensive and occurring on our dime.

If made law, HB 1394 would stop this injustice. We urge the Committee to pass HB 1394.