



Testimony in Support of HB1150
Presented by Prince George's 4 Palestine

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Prince George's 4 Palestine, a grassroots community organizing group of over 500 members in Prince George's County, Maryland. We are a diverse coalition of people committed to advocating for Palestinian liberation, and we have worked tirelessly to push for policies that reflect our values of justice, dignity, and human rights. Today, I am here to express our strong support for Maryland's HB1150, and I urge you to consider its critical importance in both the context of our work and the broader issues of freedom of speech, safety, and accountability.

As a former elected member of the Prince George's County Board of Education, I know far too well the dangers our students face in expressing political speech. This is why I co-led efforts to create and successfully pass a student demonstrations policy in our district, which allows students to peacefully and safely express their views without facing punitive consequences. This policy is a testament to the importance of protecting students' rights to engage in social issues, and it serves as a model of how we can safeguard their voices, just as HB1150 does on the state level.

Specifically, HB1150 will protect young people from doxxing, the practice of maliciously publishing personal information about an individual to cause them harm. For activists seeking peace in the Middle East, doxxing has become a real and frankly terrifying concern. As CNBC reported last year, Republican donors have been funding a far-right activist group which publishes the names and photos of peaceful student activists, accusing them of antisemitism and supporting terrorism.

Here in Maryland, our group has been peacefully advocating for an end to the U.S. sponsorship of Israeli violence for nearly a year and a half. As evidence of the broad support for this agenda throughout the community, eight municipalities within Prince George's County have passed resolutions calling for a permanent ceasefire in Palestine. We have held rallies and vigils, worked with local elected officials to pass these resolutions, and advocated to our federal representatives. Despite the orderly and considerate nature of our efforts, we all fear doxxing—because it can ruin lives. Many of our members are Jewish, yet the fear of being accused of antisemitism and losing jobs or educational opportunities is real, because the reputational smears of the far-right are ruthless.

Prince George's County is home to a number of institutions of higher learning, including Bowie State University, Prince George's Community College, Capitol College, and more. Many students, faculty, and staff at these institutions actively engage in advocacy for social justice issues, including Palestinian liberation. These individuals should not have to fear retaliation for expressing their views or engaging in peaceful activism.

Furthermore, we have seen underage teenage activists in our county who have been fighting for Palestinian rights. Just last year, hundreds of students from Bowie High School participated in a walkout calling for a ceasefire resolution, demanding an end to the violence in Palestine. These young activists are particularly vulnerable to doxxing, as they navigate the complexities of speaking out while still in high school. They, too, could become targets of online harassment, threats, and intimidation simply for using their voices to advocate for what they believe is right.

As you may know, Prince George's County is also home to our state's flagship school, the University of Maryland, which has seen years of targeted harassment, doxxing, and intimidation aimed at students who advocate for Palestinian rights. Every year, students who raise their voices in support of Palestine have been subjected to malicious online campaigns, with their personal information shared publicly, leading to threats and harassment. This kind of harassment is not just an attack on individuals; it is an attack on the very essence of free speech, academic freedom, and democratic engagement.

Doxxing is an act of intimidation. It is a form of violence that seeks to silence dissent by making individuals fear for their safety. For our group, it is not just an abstract concern—it is a daily reality for many of our members. The fear that our members face when standing up for Palestinian rights is real, and it is growing. This is why HB1150 is so critical. It will help protect individuals who are targeted for speaking out against injustice and allow our community to continue its work without fear of retaliation.

We believe HB1150 sends a powerful message that Maryland will not tolerate intimidation, harassment, or violence aimed at silencing those advocating for justice. It is a step toward ensuring that all Marylanders—whether they are advocating for Palestinian rights or any other cause—can speak out freely and safely.

Our community is strong, but we cannot do this work alone. We need the protection of our lawmakers to ensure that our voices continue to be heard, that our students are safe on campus, and that our rights to organize and advocate for justice are upheld.

Prince George's 4 Palestine stands in full support of HB1150, and we urge this committee to pass it without hesitation. Thank you for your time, your attention, and your commitment to justice.

Sincerely,
Raaheela Ahmed
Prince George's 4 Palestine