



**Maryland General Assembly
House Judiciary Committee
March 5, 2025**

Testimony of Meredith R. Weisel
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ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in strong **opposition** to ***House Bill 1394, Civil Actions – Nonprofit Organizations – Unauthorized Support of Israeli Settlement Activity (Not on Our Dime Act)***.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” As a leading anti-hate organization, for decades one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, producing research to inform the public, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry, and elected leaders to promote best practices to effectively address and counter these threats. Further, ADL conducts an annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, which is widely used by law enforcement, educational institutions, elected officials, and the community at large to not only respond to antisemitic incidents, but also to create change.

HB1394 has been rightfully questioned by many in the community, and we urge this body to oppose this dangerous bill as leaders of the Maryland General Assembly. We have grave concerns that this bill targets nonprofits doing important work here in Maryland and around the world. Its broad language could and likely would punish many Jewish and pro-Israel nonprofit organizations, calling for them to have actions taken against them by the Attorney General (AG). The AG could bring an action for injunctive relief and damages against a director, officer, partner, trustee, manager, or any other agent of the nonprofit who is found in violation. Further, it states the AG may be allowed to seek not less than one million dollars in damages. The bill goes even further in that it would allow an individual not just the Attorney General the ability to seek injunctive relief and damages against the organization and all the named parties above. Finally, it allows the AG or prevailing plaintiff to remove the nonprofit from the registry of charitable solicitation.

This bill risks eliminating a huge swath of Jewish communal nonprofits, including those that do humanitarian and life-saving work. We are extremely concerned that this bill would divide Marylanders and distract them from the important issues we face in our state every day. We are asking you to recognize this harm and speak out against this bill. Another large concern is that the bill’s language seeks to inject Maryland enforcement authorities as arbiters in an international conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Though the bill’s title would suggest that its focus is on “settler violence” in Israel, its overly broad language could arguably sweep up and impose severe penalties on many Jewish and pro-Israel nonprofit organizations (including their directors, officers

and employees) doing critical humanitarian work far removed from the conduct described in the bill.

Regardless of intent, this bill will also necessarily have a chilling effect on the work of these charitable organizations and the willingness of individuals to lead or work for them. We are deeply familiar with the complex issues surrounding Israel, and we are fierce advocates for dialogue that advances peace in the Middle East, including the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This bill does not achieve that goal. Instead, it sows greater division among Marylanders and distracts from the important work that our legislators do for our state each and every day.

**We urge the House Judiciary Committee to give
HB1394 an unfavorable report.**