

Charlie Cooper

2359 Nutmeg Terrace
Baltimore, MD 21209

**Testimony in Support of HB 1394 - Civil Actions - Nonprofit Organizations -
Unauthorized Support of Israeli Settlement Activity (Not On Our Dime Act)**

To the House Judiciary Committee

March 5, 2025

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to hear Rabbi Arik Ascherman speak about his experience trying to protect Palestinians in the West Bank against the harassment, theft, and violence that is routinely perpetrated by Israeli settlers. These acts are intended to discourage Palestinians from herding and olive harvesting and to encourage them to abandon their land so that Israelis can expropriate it. The Israeli Defense Force permits these illegal acts.

Rabbi Ascherman is the founder of the organization, "Torat Tzedek-Torah of Justice," and he has a long history of human rights work. [Here](#) is an excerpt of his story of defending a Palestinian shepherd last August:

Then settlers on motorcycles tore into his flock, scattering them and driving them towards a [Jewish] settlement, where they would disappear forever. We almost never manage to recover stolen flocks. My fellow human rights defenders chased after them and managed to begin to bring them back. The motorcycles came back and scattered them again.

Rabbi Ascherman's story gives us a window into the kinds of illegal actions that Maryland charities should not be allowed to support – the kinds of actions that motivate the introduction of HB 1394.

When the ceasefire in Gaza began on January 19, 2025, Israel dramatically escalated its illegal actions in the West Bank. According to [National Public Radio](#), more than 40,000 people have been forced from their homes. "In Jenin refugee camp, bulldozed roads were photographed with new street signs reportedly now written in Hebrew." ([United Nations](#).) When we hear that Israel wants all Palestinians to be expelled from Gaza, we should understand that this applies more broadly to the West Bank.

All these actions described in the definitions section on pages 2 and 3 of HB 1394 are illegal under international law, and we should not be complicit in supporting this type of ethnic cleansing. Please issue a favorable report on HB 1394, and take one small step for justice.