



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

UNFAVORABLE

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

Judiciary Committee
March 5, 2025

The Maryland Legislative Jewish Caucus (MLJC), a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates, **strongly opposes** HB 1394, which prohibits non-profit organizations registered in the State of Maryland from knowingly engaging in unauthorized support of Israeli settlement activity.

We have a variety of concerns about this bill. Perhaps most importantly, the bill seeks to insert Maryland law enforcement into a complex international conflict between Israelis and Palestinians—ignoring current events and the current conflict in the region. The legislation presupposes borders that have not yet been negotiated between the parties in a final status agreement.

The bill also uses overly broad language that could impose severe penalties on many pro-Israel and Jewish nonprofit organizations, including the individuals employed by them and serving on their boards, that are engaged in essential humanitarian work far removed from the conduct described in the bill. The bill's 10-year statute of limitations and requirement of penalties of \$1 million or more would most certainly have a chilling effect on the charitable work of these organizations and the willingness of individuals to lead and volunteer for them. It is also unclear whether the bill is legally enforceable.

We are quite familiar with the complex issues surrounding Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and we advocate for dialogue that advances peace in the Middle East. We do not believe that this bill advances that goal. Instead, it sows division in communities and distracts from the important work that our legislators do for our state.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge an unfavorable report on HB 1394.