

Testimony on HB1455
State Retirement and Pension System - Divestment From Israel

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Ann Gordon, I live in Baltimore, District 43A. I was a state worker for 33 years, and retired as the Director of the State's Equal Employment Opportunity Office, a gubernatorial appointment, serving under Governors Glandening and Ehrlich. I am a member of Jewish Voice for Peace, and a member of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (MSRPS), from which I receive a monthly pension.

The 65 million dollars that MSRPS choses to invest in Israel Bonds funds ethnic cleansing, torture, murder, and the theft of Palestinian lives, lands, and liberty. Why is Maryland's pension system investing in violent genocide?

I was born in Baltimore the same year Israel became a state. For seventy seven years, Palestinian voices have gone unheard and dismissed.

It is time to correct the mistakes of the past. Maryland was the first state south of the Mason Dixon Line to divest from South Africa's racist apartheid regime. We have also divested our funds from Russia, Iran, and Sudan. With Maryland pension system funds, Israel has bombed Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Qatar, Gaza and the West Bank, and now Iran.

It is time for the courage to act, and divest Maryland's \$65 million in saleable Israel Bonds. I urge a favorable report on HB1455.