

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1455 – FAVORABLE

State Retirement and Pension System – Divestment from Israel

House Appropriations Committee, March 19, 2026

Karen Caplan
Silver Spring, MD

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

I am writing as a Jewish Marylander in support of House Bill 1455, which would mandate divestment from Israeli bonds. The State of Maryland has shown in the past that it can choose to refrain from investing in national entities— such as South Africa or Russia— that it deems to be engaged in unethical actions. Israel’s catastrophic destruction of Gaza—including the starvation and forced displacement of Gazans—and its continuing illegal activity in the West Bank certainly constitute such behavior.

Our state employee pension system should be supported with responsible, ethical investment. Marylanders should be able to feel confident that the state is not investing in brutal oppression. As a Jew, I am particularly concerned that support for Israel is too often conflated with support for Jewish Americans. I am one of a rapidly growing number of Jews here in Maryland and beyond who believe fervently that support for a right-wing genocidal regime in Israel makes us less, not more, safe.

I urge that the committee return a favorable report for HB1455.