



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 1455

STATE RETIREMENT AND PENSION SYSTEM - DIVESTMENT FROM ISRAEL

MARCH 19, 2026

OPPOSE

Agudath Israel of Maryland, the Mid-Atlantic regional office for Agudath Israel of America – a renowned national Jewish advocacy organization with chapters across the country - speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland. Thousands of the members of our community have visited Israel, have lived in Israel, and/or have family members who live in Israel, and we speak on their behalf as well. We speak today in opposition to House Bill 1455.

This bill would require divestment from investments related to the State of Israel. It is deeply hurtful to see how the Jewish State of Israel is being singled out and unfairly maligned. Since its inception, the State of Israel has been a prime target of gross antisemitic propaganda and violence. This bill would lend support to those hateful voices.

On October 7th, 2023, in middle of the Jewish religious holiday of Simchat Torah, Hamas and similarly aligned groups and individuals engaged in an televised orgy of wholesale rape, murder, and torture. Had Israel so chosen, it could have responded without care for civilian life, in which case the casualties of the conflict would have been far greater. In similar cases of urban conflict, such as the Battle of Berlin, a far greater amount of civilians were killed within a far shorter period of time. Of course, due to the refusal of Hamas and the other terrorist groups to disclose their membership or to don uniforms (as required by the rules of war), there is no way to know exactly how many of the dead were in fact combatants. It can, however, be safely deduced that Hamas members and similarly aligned militants do indeed comprise a significant portion of the total. The tragic deaths of the many innocents can be laid directly at the door of Hamas and their decision to continue embedding themselves in the civilian population. Even today, Hamas continues to murder any internal political opponents who attempt to dissent to their stated goal of driving all Israelis into the sea.

The attempt to demonize Israel and single out the Jewish State for pariah status is deeply troubling. We urge you to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 1455.