

I am a proud Jewish Baltimorean, born and raised in Pikesville and currently a BCPS Spanish teacher living in NE Baltimore City, and also a city school parent. I am also a founding member of Hinenu Baltimore, a thriving and growing spiritual community of Jews dedicated to justice and human rights. I have also been a member of many anti-war campaigns since the 1990's and I've been a Jewish Voice for Peace member for decades.

I don't want my retirement funding through Israeli Bonds to serve as a direct loan to Israel's treasury, directly tying our MD state government to an economy of displacement, human rights abuses and the genocide of the Palestinian people.

As an educator, I know that the stories we tell matter. Zionist propaganda and interpretations of history teach us that Jewish people are alone, that to remedy the harms of antisemitism we must think of ourselves as always under attack... that we cannot trust others. It teaches us fear, and that the best response to fear is more weapons, a taller wall, bombing whole families of Palestinian people who are already displaced in refugee camps- and in this case as well, blind support for the state of Israel through financial backing such as our State Pension funds.

The Israeli government must be held accountable for its actions. Blind support of the actions of the Israeli nation state through holding these bonds, is not the same as supporting the Jewish people, and as I Jew I emphatically don't want this done in my name. Let's use the leverage of our state pension money and make the decision to truly commit to our socially responsible investing and obligations to protect human rights. We can be part of a force for justice that can only truly begin when we start holding the Israeli government accountable. This divestment will be one piece of that crucial, life saving work.

Especially as we face the most scary and violent antisemitism I have seen in my 49 years, fueled by white nationalism in the United States today, I align myself with all people who choose solidarity. We are safer together, standing with those working for justice here in Baltimore and around the world.

Again, I urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass HB1455.