

**Favorable Testimony in Support of HB1455: State Retirement and Pension System -
Divestment From Israel
March 2026**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am a Jewish resident of Baltimore City. I was born here and grew up here, attending synagogue and Jewish day school in Northwest Baltimore. I moved away for my young adulthood, exploring other cities in other states, and chose to move back to Maryland because of how resilient and responsible our communities are. The values instilled in me throughout my childhood of Jewish learning are what bring me here today: a rock-solid belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all life, and a strong drive towards justice. Tzedek, tzedek tirdof. Justice, justice you shall pursue.

I am speaking today in favor of HB1455. Maryland's State Retirement and Pension System holds \$65.5 million of investments in Israeli bonds as of Dec. 2025. These unconditional loans to the Israeli treasury provide critical financial support for Israel's continued forced displacement, starvation, and bombings in Gaza, as well as surging Israeli settler attacks, illegal settlement construction, and military operations in the occupied West Bank.

As a resident of Maryland, I want my tax dollars to be invested instead in our local communities. As Maryland lawmakers, it's also your responsibility to ensure that our state's public employees, who work hard to preserve our state's excellent quality of life, can depend upon financially sound and ethical investments on the part of our state's pension system.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB1455.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sable Stewart