

From: Shubh Agnihotri  
To: Members of the House Appropriations Committee  
03/17/2026  
RE: HB1455 - FAVORABLE

Members of the House Appropriations Committee, my name is Shubh Agnihotri and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park.

894 days have passed since the start of Israel's genocide in Gaza. More than 70,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel with constant support from the United States. At every level of government, we witness the protection of the State of Israel. Municipal leaders who claim they have no stake in the "**conflict**"; state leaders who establish working groups to **think** about action, tout investments in defense contractor companies who profit directly from the slaughter of innocent lives, and who attempt to erase pro-Palestinian books from library shelves because they dare to promote equal rights in Palestine. All the while, our federal leaders continue to sign off on funding and weapons sales that allow all of this to keep happening. The state of Maryland has a responsibility to refuse to take part in this genocide any longer.

One of the most effective ways to bring about the end of an apartheid state is divestment. We have an opportunity to lead our region as a moral compass. Just recently in 2024, Maryland elected officials celebrated the 40th anniversary of the State of Maryland divesting from South African apartheid. In 40 years will leaders be able to look back at us and say we did the right thing? We can celebrate the efforts of our predecessors but will we take the next step forward and learn from their courage? Will we make the difficult decision now or delay it for another set of leaders to take charge and finish the job? We have a chance now with this bill.

I urge a favorable committee report on HB1455. Thank you for your work on the Appropriations Committee and for your consideration of this testimony.