

The Honorable Chair
Delegate Ben Barnes
House Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Vice Chair
Delegate Anne R. Kaiser

**RE: FAVORABLE - SUPPORT of House Bill 1455
State Retirement and Pension System - Divestment From Israel**

To the Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is ZaQuane Dozier, I am a resident of Baltimore City. I am writing to name my support for HB 1455 the "State Retirement and Pension System - Divestment From Israel" bill. This bill would require Maryland's State Retirement and Pension System (MSRPS) to review and divest, where possible, from existing investments in the State of Israel, and prevent new funds from being invested.

How we invest our money matters. It sets a standard and expectation of our future. They reflect the values and priorities of a society, showing how resources are allocated to support various needs, especially for vulnerable populations. Our pension system's public commitments to socially responsible investing and obligations as a signatory of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment demand we address our existing \$73.7 million of investments in Israeli bonds by MSRPS (as of July 30, 2025) whose State is accused of committing War Crimes. If Maryland claims a commitment to socially responsible investing, our pension funds cannot be used to financially support a government whose actions raise serious human rights concerns.

I am also against Israel embedding its influence throughout our local, state and federal government apparatus. Divesting from a foreign entity that is committing genocide and starting wars of aggression for colonial purposes is one of the first steps we can pursue to take back our democracy from the Israeli lobby. If we can't stand up against genocide that is being funded by our tax dollars, how can we have a well functioning democracy without foreign influence through our citizen's retirement pension funds as well as our government.

For these reasons and many more, **I ask the Appropriations Committee to give HB 1455 a favorable report.**

Thank you for your time,
ZaQuane
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