

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 Hasan Isham, I am a resident of Montgomery County and also the father of a 23-month-old little girl. 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.

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.

We have witnessed what many human rights organizations and millions around the world recognize as a genocide in Gaza. Children—children the same age as my daughter—are being killed, displaced, and deprived of the basic conditions needed to survive. As a father, this is not abstract to me. My daughter was born safely at Holy Cross Hospital. She has access to food, water, and loving parents. A child born the same day in Gaza has lived under bombardment and siege from the very beginning of life. And yet, Maryland’s public pension funds remain invested in the government carrying out an extermination campaign.

We have seen video of strikes on a girl's elementary school in Iran with Tomahawk missiles. They killed 150 little girls and the adults that tried to save them. Multiple administration officials have said that the United States is in this war because of pressure from Israel.

Continued political and financial alignment with Israel increases the likelihood of further devastation, instability, and loss of life. HB1455 allows Maryland to take a clear and responsible step back from that trajectory. It simply says that, where consistent with fiduciary duty, Maryland should not continue to invest public worker pensions in the sovereign debt of a government engaged in ongoing mass violence.

As a father, I am thinking about the world my daughter will grow up in—and the role we play in shaping it. HB1455 is a step toward aligning Maryland's investments with basic principles of human dignity and accountability.

I ask the Appropriations Committee to give HB 1455 a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hasan Isham

Glenmont, MD

hasanisham90@gmail.com