

FAVORABLE

March 17, 2026

Ben Barnes, Chair – Appropriations Committee

Dear Del. Barnes,

I wish to express my **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1455 “State Retirement and Pension System - Divestment from Israel.”

This bill, led by Jewish Voice for Peace chapters, would require Maryland State’s Retirement and Pension System (MDRPS) to search for, discover, and then divest from any investments (and refrain from any future investments) that benefit the Israeli government, which is today committing the international crimes of apartheid, occupation, forced-removal, land annexation, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, and genocide against the people of Palestine.

Current investments in the Israeli economy and government could be very harmful to pensioners, and could place the state’s trustees in legal jeopardy. Ethical-investment and transparency-in-government standards demand that this bill be **moved out of committee** with a favorable vote so that it might be debated by the whole General Assembly.

Sincerely,

S.S.L.

Steven Sellers Lapham
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