



TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1382 - FAVORABLE

State Procurement - Prohibited Certifications - Boycotts of Foreign Countries

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, March 11, 2026

Joanna Silver
Silver Spring, MD

Dear Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and esteemed members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

My name is Joanna Silver. I am a resident of Maryland District 18 and I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Jewish Collective (MCJC), an organization of Jewish-identifying residents of Montgomery County committed to collective liberation as the cornerstone of a vibrant, safe, and supportive Jewish community and a safe and equitable County and state for all. MCJC urges this Committee's support for HB 1328, which prohibits the state from conditioning its contracts on a business's promise not to boycott a foreign nation.

It is contrary to our most fundamental freedoms for the state to limit political speech through economic coercion. While this bill applies to boycotts of any nation, it is necessary now because our current Governor has refused to withdraw former Governor Hogan's executive order that prevents state contractors from specifically participating in boycotts of Israel.

MCJC is an organization of Jews who hold views that are critical of the state of Israel because of its historical and present subjugation of, and violence towards, Palestinians. These critical voices now reflect a majority among American Jews (see, e.g., a *Washington Post* [poll](#) that recently found that 61% of U.S. Jews believe that Israel is committing war crimes). Here in Maryland over 600 Jews recently signed [a letter](#) defending Senator Chris Van Hollen's right to criticize Israel.

Using boycotts as an ethical and peaceful tool to effect political change in governments with which you disagree is part of a well-established and effective tradition. Maryland has done this itself through divestments from harmful regimes including Sudan, Iran, and Russia. Many of MCJC's members choose to boycott Israel individually through our own purchasing choices, in accordance with our own Jewish values as well as our concerns for Jewish safety, both in Israel and around the world. It is unacceptable for our state to weaponize the money our tax dollars provide to prevent private business from acting in accord with their own values through peaceful boycotts of any foreign nation.

We urge you to issue a positive report on HB1382.

@mcjewishcollective on Facebook, Instagram, and Bluesky

Our Mission, Vision, and Values Statement [here](#).