



Dear Chair Wells and Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

[Jewish Voice for Peace](#) Baltimore and DC Metro chapters are submitting testimony **in support of HB1271, to establish reparations for historical inequality through an excise tax on Maryland's largest endowments.** Jewish Voice for Peace is a national Jewish organization working towards Palestinian freedom and Judaism beyond Zionism. We have over 3000 members and supporters in Maryland, with chapters in Baltimore, the DC Metro Area, and Towson University.

As an organization, we know that **both Israel and the United States were originally established through systematic social, economic, and political violence**, and have inherited structures of domination and settler colonialism that continue to shape our societies. **Overcoming these legacies to create societies where all people can live with freedom, safety, dignity, and equality requires repair as well as fundamental systemic structural transformation.** A tax on the income of the largest endowments in Maryland to fund reparations to people impacted by historical inequality is a meaningful step toward these aims.

- The early U.S. economy was built on stolen land, human beings treated as capital, and industries dependent on enslaved labor. Wealth from this system was concentrated to elites, and government and institutional actions since have perpetuated and compounded that concentration across generations¹, including specifically in Maryland. **The multigenerational fortunes in Maryland's largest endowments would not exist without wealth generated by the system of enslavement, and using a portion of the income this wealth generates for repair and restitution is a concrete step toward meaningful material transformation.**
- **The non-profits that draw on Maryland's largest endowments are exempt from dozens of taxes, and benefit from services beyond what they contribute in taxes.**² This represents further ongoing harm, especially in cities like Baltimore with a majority population impacted by historical inequality. This bill is a method of structural transformation to address this harm.
- **In both the United States and Israel, forces of authoritarianism and supremacy are trying to suppress and even criminalize education and research on the identity-based violence at the origins of our societies** — enslaved labor and theft of land here, and the 1948 Nakba in Palestine/Israel. We must push back against this not just rhetorically, but in material reparative action and real accountability, here in Maryland as well as in Palestine/Israel.

This is a perilous moment, when authoritarian forces contest the very shape of our social structures worldwide. Trying only to defend the existing unequal and oppressive systems of the recent past is not a successful path. **Instead, we must use this period of turbulence to advance true multiracial democracies—here in Maryland, in Palestine/Israel, and beyond—through genuine systemic transformation.** Thank you for your time, service, and consideration. **Please return a favorable report on HB1271.**

¹ Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*, June 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

² 1199SEIU, *Anchor Institution Expenditures Relative to the PILOT Program*, Dec 2024. <https://wufubaltimore.com/>