



**Testimony in Support of HB1382**  
*Presented by Prince George's 4 Palestine*

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

I am writing on behalf of Prince George's 4 Palestine, a grassroots community organizing group of over 500 members in Prince George's County, Maryland. We are a diverse coalition of people committed to advocating for Palestinian liberation, and we have worked tirelessly to push for policies that reflect our values of justice, dignity, and human rights. Today, I am here to express our strong support for Maryland's HB1328, and I urge you to consider its critical importance in undoing a wrong that has plagued Maryland politics since 2017.

In 2017, Larry Hogan issued executive order 01.01.2017.25, which effectively banned boycotts of Israel among bidders doing business with the State of Maryland. This discouraged principled entrepreneurs from engaging in ethical business practices, and forced others out of competition for business with the State. This executive order also violates the First-Amendment right of political boycott, as affirmed in Supreme Court case NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co.

HB 1382 would reverse this wrong by prohibiting state procurement officers from requiring bidders to certify that they are not boycotting foreign countries. Not only will this open up competition for business with the State of Maryland - benefitting citizens and taxpayers – it will also allow ethical business owners to pursue practices in keeping with their values.

As the world has seen over the last several years, Israel is a rogue, genocidal state. Roughly 80,000 people have died in Gaza since 2023, and more lives hang in the balance every day. Israeli settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank continues to be bloody and ceaseless, and hundreds more have been killed in Gaza since the so-called ceasefire began. Many of us are tired of the lie that has poisoned our politics for years – that opposing Israel's policies is anti-semitic and anti-American. Indeed, many members of our group are Jewish, and despair at not only the genocide but the domestic policies that make opposing it so challenging.

Prince George's 4 Palestine stands in full support of HB1328, and we urge this committee to pass it without hesitation. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jess Epstein  
Prince George's 4 Palestine