

Written Testimony in Support of the “Not On Our Dime Act”

Bill: HB 1184 – Civil Actions – Nonprofit Organizations – Unauthorized Support of Israeli Settlement Activity

Committee: Maryland House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Name: Jacob Keller

City/County: Takoma Park, MD

Hearing Date: March 11, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Jacob Keller**, and I am a **lifelong Marylander currently living in Takoma Park**. I write today to respectfully urge a **favorable report** on the “Not On Our Dime Act.” I believe deeply in the integrity of Maryland’s charitable sector and in the principle that the privileges granted to nonprofit organizations must be used for genuinely charitable and lawful purposes.

Charitable organizations enjoy significant public benefits. They are granted tax-exempt status, they receive donations that are tax-deductible for donors, and they operate with the trust of the public. In exchange, they are expected to serve humanitarian, educational, and charitable missions. Marylanders who donate to nonprofits deserve confidence that their contributions are supporting those missions—not funding activities that undermine human rights or violate international law.

Yet two and a half years of credible reporting have documented certain U.S.-based nonprofit organizations providing financial or material support to illegal Israeli displacement of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. These “settlements” have for decades been recognized by the international community—including bodies such as the United Nations and the International Court of Justice—as violations of international law and as serious obstacles to a just and lasting peace. Regardless of one’s views about the broader conflict, it should concern all of us when charitable structures are used to channel tax-advantaged funds into activities widely considered unlawful.

The “Not On Our Dime Act” addresses this problem in a straightforward and responsible way. The bill would prohibit nonprofit organizations operating in Maryland from aiding or abetting Israeli settlement activity and establish a clear mechanism for accountability. It allows enforcement through civil actions brought by the Attorney General or affected individuals and ensures that organizations found in violation can be removed from Maryland’s charitable solicitation registry. This oversight role is consistent with the responsibilities of the office of Anthony Brown to safeguard the integrity of charitable institutions in our state.

Importantly, this legislation does not restrict anyone’s freedom of speech, belief, or political advocacy. Individuals remain free to express their views and support causes they care about.

What the bill regulates is the **use of charitable nonprofit status**, which carries special legal privileges and responsibilities. Ensuring that these privileges are not used to subsidize unlawful activity abroad is both reasonable and necessary.

For many Maryland residents—including people like my family, friends, and fellow University of Maryland students—the credibility of charitable institutions matters deeply. When we give to charities, we do so because we believe our contributions will advance compassion, dignity, and humanitarian values. The state has a responsibility to ensure that this trust is not misused.

Maryland has long sought to uphold principles of accountability, human rights, and responsible governance. The “Not On Our Dime Act” reflects those values. It strengthens oversight of nonprofit organizations, protects the integrity of charitable giving, and ensures that Maryland’s tax policies are not used to support settlement expansion abroad.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report** on this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jacob Keller