

March 9, 2026

2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony in Support of HB1184 – Not on Our Dime Act

Good afternoon. My name is Riona Sheikh, and I am a student at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the Executive Vice President of UMD's Student Government Association. I am here to express my strong support for this bill that prevents non-profits from raising funds that support Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, Palestine.

In the village of Wadi a-Rakhim, set in the south Hebron Hills in the West Bank, a young man peered out into the sprawling streets of his hometown to see cattle trampling through. Confused and alarmed, he and his brother stepped out their homes to calm the livestock when they saw people, not from the village, were leading the animals into their town.

But as they stepped out of their homes, suddenly, the sound of gunshots rang through the air. The young man, Amir Muhammad Shanaran, 28, lay dead on the ground. His brother, Khaled, lay by his side, bleeding and gravely injured.

This was Saturday, March 7, 2026. When Amir was murdered for no reason other than daring to step outside of his ancestral home, I was spending time with my family in our house in Maryland. I didn't know that across the world, someone was being brutally murdered, his blood spilling across the soil, his family sobbing by his body. I didn't know that his murder, among countless other murders, were directly supported by organizations in my home state.

Israeli settlers in the West Bank regularly and frequently force Palestinian people out of their homes. But even more frequent these days are the repeated, violent assaults on Palestinians.

Perhaps it was controversial to speak against Israel's violence against Palestinians a few years ago, but let it be known that times are changing. What was once a vote against this bill should now be a vote in support, if you are so inclined to protect your political reputation.

I do not understand why, and for what reason, someone in this room could possibly vote against this bill; I do know that your support of cruelty and injustice will always find its way back to you.

And in the same vein, I know that any vote in support of this bill – any brave vote standing against violence and murder – will come back to you in ways you do not expect.

I strongly urge each and every one of you to vote in favor of House Bill 1184.

Thank you.