

**Testimony in Support of HB 1184
Request for a Favorable Report
House Judiciary Committee**

The Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee:

I support HB 1184 because Maryland should not allow charitable structures in this State to aid conduct that international law identifies as unlawful.

The bill is tied directly to the Fourth Geneva Convention and defines prohibited support to include the transfer of Israeli civilians into the occupied West Bank, violence against protected persons, seizure and destruction of property, forced transfer or eviction, annexation of land, and destruction of infrastructure.

The legal basis is clear. Article VI of the U.S. Constitution makes treaties part of the supreme law of the land, and the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from transferring parts of its own civilian population into territory it occupies.

The United Nations Security Council stated in Resolution 2334 that the settlements have **“no legal validity”** and constitute a **“flagrant violation”** of international law. In July 2024, the International Court of Justice concluded that Israel’s continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is unlawful and that this illegality relates to the territory occupied since 1967.

We should also be honest about language. The term **“settlers”** can sound benign, as if people are merely homesteading empty land. The term **“occupation”** can sound temporary or administrative. But the land was already inhabited, cultivated, and lived on. When land is seized, homes are demolished, people are displaced, and civilians are attacked, those realities should not be hidden behind softer political branding. That is precisely why legal terms matter.

HB 1184 is a lawful and measured effort to ensure that Maryland nonprofits do not materially support conduct that credible international authorities have deemed illegal. I urge a favorable report.

Thank you.

Grady O’Rear
Frederick, MD
On Behalf of Maryland Palestine Legislative Action Network