

**House Development Committee Hearing on HB 188**  
**October 29, 2025 — Testimony of Jawhara Qutiefan**

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is **Jawhara Qutiefan**, and I am the co-president of AMP Columbus, member of the Ohio divest steering committee, a business owner, mother, and a lifelong Ohioan.

I am here to speak strongly in opposition to **House Bill 188**, which would send \$10 million of Ohio's tax dollars into a partnership with Israel.

This money would come from the **General Revenue Fund** — the very fund meant to pay for our schools, healthcare, public safety, and support for struggling families. Every dollar in this Fund matters. Families in my community are already making impossible choices between rent, childcare, and groceries. Small businesses and farmers are under pressure. and with SNAP cuts coming from the federal level, supermarkets and farms across Ohio will feel the squeeze even harder. That is exactly why we should be investing **here at home** — in Ohio families, Ohio startups, Ohio farms — not in a foreign government.

The truth is, HB 188 will not create meaningful opportunities for Ohioans. What it does is guarantee seats for pro-Israel organizations, exclude neutral Ohioans, Palestinian Ohioans and Arab-American voices, and embed JobsOhio — an entity already criticized for lack of transparency — into a commission that has no accountability to the public. This is not an economic development bill. It is a **political partnership** designed to mediate Israel's image at a time when the world is watching its human rights record with grave concern.

As a Palestinian American, I cannot ignore how directly this legislation touches my community. A partnership like this not only silences Palestinian Ohioans — it risks tying our state to companies and institutions who are complicit in illegal settlements, war crimes, and ongoing violations of international law, apartheid, genocide and the list goes on. That is not what Ohioans want their tax dollars to support.

If this committee's mission is truly economic development, then I ask you: why aren't we investing this \$10 million in the small grocers in your districts, who will lose customers when SNAP cuts hit? Why not direct it to farmers and local startups, who could turn every dollar into jobs and growth for Ohio? Why prioritize a foreign partnership over the needs of Ohioans?

HB 188 is the wrong fund, the wrong time, and the wrong message. It sends a signal that Ohio cares more about international politics than about the people who live here and pay taxes here.

I urge you to reject this bill and stand with Ohio families, small businesses, and farms. Please vote **NO** on HB 188.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you make the right choice.

