

Hello, my name is Jessica Eberly, I am a resident of Columbus, OH and I have lived in Ohio my entire life. As a proud Ohio native, I am appalled at the proposed israel-Ohio partnership in HB 188, and do not understand how our elected officials, who are supposed to be some of the brightest and most equitable among us, would consider passing this piece of legislation. My only conclusion is that if someone supports an apartheid occupation, they must be benefitting from that apartheid in some way, which is in stark contrast to our country and state's democratic values.

As you may know, israel has been declared not only an apartheid state by the International Court of Justice, Amnesty International, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the government of South Africa, it has also been found responsible for committing genocide against Palestinians by multiple organizations- including the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Amnesty International, a UN Special Committee, and even the Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem.

Partnering Ohio with israel directly risks complicity with these war crimes and atrocities. I urge you to vote no on HB 188 and preserve Ohio's dignity and democratic values. Partnering with a foreign government that is committing war crimes, apartheid, and genocide is not what Ohioans need. We need our legislators to take a stand for Ohioans' best interests and endorse policies that invest in OUR communities. When there are people in our state who suffer from lack of housing, food insecurity, access to appropriate mental health and healthcare services, and poor infrastructure and public transit, supporting HB 188 comes across as tone-deaf and a slap in the face to your hard-working constituents who have chosen Ohio to be their home. The least you can do as our elected officials is to choose Ohio back and vote no on a bill that would tie us to a genocidal, apartheid occupation.