



**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 188
October 28, 2025**

Rana Abuhashim, YUSRA Organizing

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Development Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 188.

My name is Rana Abuhashim, and I am testifying on behalf of YUSRA Organizing, a grassroots, Muslim-led coalition of young Ohioans committed to advancing justice, equity, and human rights for all communities.

HB 188 would create an *Ohio–Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership*, embedding a pro-Israel commission within our state government to promote trade, investment, and policy collaboration with Israel. This proposal is not simply an economic initiative, it is a political alignment with a government currently under international investigation for war crimes, apartheid, and genocide.

Israel has systematically targeted civilian infrastructure in Gaza. The [United Nations Human Rights Office](#) reported that by mid-2024, 22 of Gaza’s 38 hospitals were destroyed or rendered nonfunctional. A [Harvard FXB Center](#) analysis found that over half of Gaza’s schools, hospitals, and water facilities were damaged or destroyed in the first six weeks of Israel’s assault. [Human Rights Watch](#) documented Israeli strikes on more than 500 schools — many used as shelters for displaced families. The [UN Commission of Inquiry](#) reported that Israel has destroyed over 90% of Gaza’s educational institutions and more than half of its religious and cultural sites.

Israel has also unjustly detained American citizens, including humanitarian workers. An Ohio veteran and teacher was detained for five days and subjected to mistreatment before being released and returning home. That reality underscores the dangers of legitimizing a government that routinely targets civilians and mistreats even U.S. citizens.

Establishing a state trade commission to reward and deepen partnerships with a government responsible for such atrocities would be morally indefensible. It risks making Ohio complicit in crimes against humanity and aligning our public institutions with injustice rather than accountability.

The structure of HB 188 also raises serious ethical and democratic concerns. Every seat on this proposed commission is reserved for individuals with ties to pro-Israel organizations or trade networks, while Palestinian, Arab-American, Muslim, and neutral Ohio voices are explicitly excluded. This one-sided representation ensures that only one political perspective shapes Ohio’s international partnerships.

Equally concerning is the bill's connection to JobsOhio, a quasi-private entity shielded from public transparency. The use of such a mechanism makes it nearly impossible for taxpayers to know where or how state resources are being used or who benefits.

This bill also reflects deeply misplaced priorities. At a time when thousands of Ohio families have lost SNAP benefits, funding to food banks has been cut, and schools, libraries, and healthcare systems remain underfunded, our legislature should be focused on meeting the needs of our people, not on building political and economic alliances with a government engaged in mass civilian harm and murder.

If lawmakers wish to expand trade and innovation, there already exists a bipartisan alternative, HB 291, that promotes fair, transparent, and inclusive global partnerships without legitimizing human-rights violations. That is the kind of forward-looking leadership Ohio deserves.

HB 188 does not serve Ohio's people, economy, or moral integrity. We urge this committee to reject HB 188 and to invest instead in the communities, workers, and families who make Ohio strong.

Thank you for your time and consideration.