

My name is Rima Dabdoub, a resident of Hilliard, and I strongly oppose HB 188. This bill would funnel millions of taxpayer dollars into a foreign partnership with the State of Israel. This funding would be sent overseas at a time when Ohio communities are facing deep cuts to libraries, schools, healthcare, infrastructure, and public services.

As a Palestinian American who was born and raised in Ohio—and lived, worked, and volunteered here my whole life— I am horrified that our lawmakers are making this proposal at all, and during such an economically unstable time. I have serious concerns about this bill's lack of transparency, oversight, and return on investment for Ohio taxpayers. The legislation includes no clear benchmarks, performance reporting requirements, or community input mechanisms. The bill is biased with political appointees tied to pro-Israel organizations, explicitly excluding Palestinian, Arab American, Muslim, and neutral voices. It contains no independent oversight, no competitive process, and no clear safeguards to ensure accountability or public benefit.

Israel is currently under international investigation for crimes against humanity. A trade partnership now makes Ohio complicit. Ohio has ethical obligations to its taxpayers to do business in a sound manner that benefits Ohioans. Why is Ohio moving towards sending our hard-earned tax dollars to a foreign entity committing genocide, at a time when SNAP benefits are being cut? How can food stamps be cut, but 10 million was found to support Israel? Schools are also losing critical funding, government employees, libraries, and infrastructure are also facing cuts. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

I strongly believe Ohio's resources should stay in Ohio, to build up the economy of our own communities. Our state dollars should be supporting our state, not leaving to support a foreign government. Please stand for transparency, equity, and fiscal responsibility, and consider the people of Ohio who elected you—not foreign lobbyists—and to vote NO on HB 188

Sincerely,
Rima Dabdoub