

My name is Marya Keeny, a resident of Columbus, Ohio, and I strongly oppose HB 188.

This bill would prioritize partnership with a foreign country at the expense of Ohioans. As a disabled person receiving public assistance, I am concerned for my own well-being, and that of others in a similar position, with upcoming cuts to food assistance and healthcare. The ten million dollars this bill proposes to spend on this partnership should stay on Ohio.

I am alarmed that our legislature would create a commission that hard-codes pro-Israel lobbyists while excluding Palestinian and Arab-American voices. It lacks oversight, transparency, and any guarantee of benefit to Ohioans.

The United Nations recently determined that Israel is committing a genocide in Gaza. Rewarding that conduct with a state partnership places Ohio on the wrong side of history. This bill would undermine our state's moral credibility by aligning it with a government accused of war crimes.

Ohio's duty is to invest in our own communities, not to legitimize foreign governments engaged in systemic human-rights abuses. Please vote NO on HB 188 and support HB 291 instead.

Sincerely,

Marya Keeny
Columbus Ohio 43229