

Finance Committee
HB 96 Opponent Testimony
Emily Kichler, Ohio Constituent

29 May 2025

Dear Finance Committee:

I reject this bill on principle, as it likely contains a myriad of last-minute additions that were written and shared behind closed doors with the intention that no one would see them. This practice as a whole should be illegal. One unfavorable addition that was brought to my attention is the Ohio-Israel Agriculture Fund, which supplies \$500,000 in taxpayer dollars to support trade with Israel.

I am a fan of equitable trade, when it is necessary, ecologically reasonable, and/or mutually beneficial. I would love to deepen our relationships with neighboring countries that have been wronged by decades of colonizing trade infrastructure. These neighbors are currently being alienated with high tariffs and tight scrutiny at the border, to say the least.

I am not interested in strengthening the finances or power of a state that is consistently committing war crimes and not being held accountable for them, to also say the least. I am especially in opposition of spending half a million in taxpayer dollars to do so.

I am skeptical of the effectiveness or clear direction of this partnership. In a proponent testimony for HB 188, a bill to support trade partnerships with Israel, a speaker talked about Israel's incredible innovations around desalination, and that maybe Israel can help us with our water issues here. This statement let me know that there is absolutely no plan for this partnership, considering that we live in a place with some of the only surface freshwater in the world. Our current issue is that the water is being polluted by industrial animal agriculture waste, and if small local farmers and leading local organizations in this issue were consulted, we could be tackling this issue on our own, justly and without taking away any possible potential gains from Ohioans.

Thank you for your time in reading and taking in my feedback today,

Emily Kichler