

# Maryland Jewish Advocacy

DAY & RECEPTION 2017



## Anti-Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS)

### *What does the legislation do?*

The bill would stop Maryland's retirement and pension system from investing in companies that are participating in the discriminatory boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) effort against the State of Israel, and prohibit such companies from securing procurement contracts with the State of Maryland.

### *Why should Maryland's General Assembly get involved?*

Supporters of BDS are seeking to delegitimize the democratic State of Israel. Israel is a vital ally and economic partner of both the United States and Maryland - this legislation represents an opportunity for the General Assembly to fight the boycott of Israel movement and demonstrate Maryland's commitment to the only democracy in the Middle East.

### *Is Maryland actually investing in, or doing business with, companies that boycott Israel?*

Yes, the Chief Investment Officer of the state pension system has found publicly listed companies identified as participating in the BDS movement that are directly held within the system.

### *Has Maryland ever done anything like this before?*

Yes! This legislation is similar to laws approved previously by the Maryland General Assembly related to divestment and sanctions in Sudan and Iran. In fact, this legislation seeks to amend the existing procurement and pension investment laws for Sudan and Iran to include companies that are boycotting Israel.

### *How is this different from past BDS efforts considered by the General Assembly?*

The General Assembly previously considered anti-BDS legislation related to college campuses and funding for the universities – a measure that raised a variety of issues related to the First Amendment and academic freedom. This bill focuses on Maryland's pension system and procurement contracts only, and whether the state should be investing in and doing business with companies that are participating in a movement that's ultimate goal is to end the State of Israel.

### *Have any other states acted in this area?*

Yes. More than a dozen states have approved similar anti-BDS legislation, including Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Numerous other states have passed resolutions condemning the BDS movement, and at least 35 governors (including Governor Hogan) have joined the American Jewish Committee's *Governors United against BDS* initiative. The legislation has been bipartisan, winning strong support from both Democratic and Republican legislators and governors.

**Maryland has a thriving economic partnership with Israel, benefitting from growing investment and jobs. It's time for the state to stand up for Israel and reject the BDS movement.**