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Thomas Hall
State Representative

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Rep. Hall HB 188 Sponsor Testimony

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 188, legislation to create the Ohio Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership—our attempt to create a partnership to advance trade and investment between Ohio and Israel.

In August of 2023, I was very fortunate to take a trip to Israel as a part of a delegation of the Ohio House. During the trip, we were able to meet with various industries and startups located in Israel and learn more about their business climate. Some may even argue Tel Aviv and Haifa in Israel are two hubs for business startups in the entire world. When talking with various business startups, I would ask, when these businesses would reach certain metrics or look to grow their business, where is the next location they would seek? Their answer included states like New York, Florida, or even Europe. But never once was Ohio mentioned. The piece of legislation aims to change that by seeking to create an alliance between Ohio and Israel to foster growth and innovation.

To reiterate some of the important details of the bill, the make-up of the partnership is similar to other commissions or partnerships that have been passed before the General Assembly before, (SB 195, Ohio/Ireland Trade Commission) and is clearly outlined in the bill. Lines 27-74 discuss membership and lines 75-102 go into further detail about seats and terms. This partnership will be housed under the Ohio Department of Development and required to submit a report no later than 15 months after the effective date of its activities and recommendations. We also have decided to add an appropriation of five million dollars from the GRF.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, we would be happy to take any questions you may have.