

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 188

Submitted by Dr. Elad Granot

May 6, 2025

Dear Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 188, which establishes the Ohio-Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership.

My name is Dr. Elad Granot. I am a three-time business school dean, a veteran economic development leader, and an expert on U.S.–Israel trade collaboration. Over the past two decades, I have worked closely with Ohio civic and economic development initiatives, venture capital partners, academic institutions, and startup ecosystems in both Israel and Ohio to build meaningful, outcomes-driven partnerships. I have helped advance innovation-driven economic development through my work with organizations like OhioX and multiple Ohio universities including Cleveland State University, Ashland university, and John Carroll university.

This bill represents more than a symbolic alliance. It is a strategic economic instrument for our state. I can personally attest to the strength, resilience, and ingenuity of the Israeli innovation economy. Israel is not only a global startup hub; it is a partner nation whose values—ingenuity under constraint, entrepreneurial spirit, and collaborative research—mirror the aspirations of many Ohio communities. When Ohio connects with Israel, we are connecting with one of the world’s most dynamic sources of applied innovation in AI, water tech, agricultural tech, defense, and cybersecurity.

But this bill also answers a real question I have heard firsthand from Israeli entrepreneurs: *Why not Ohio?*

As a frequent speaker at economic conferences in Israel, I often hear Israeli founders cite New York, California, and Florida as their U.S. expansion targets. This legislation, if passed, gives us the infrastructure, visibility, and relationships to change that. We can—and must—position Ohio as a landing pad for Israeli startups looking to expand into the U.S. market.

The economic upside is significant. As noted in previous testimony, Israel has more companies listed on NASDAQ than any country outside the U.S. American firms have long relied on Israeli innovation, and Ohio has the talent, workforce, and industry clusters to benefit directly. With a modest investment and a strong commission structure, HB 188 ensures that our state becomes a central player in that collaboration.

As someone who has helped convene partnerships between Israeli scientists and U.S. institutions, including in sectors like agritech and medtech, I know how quickly these collaborations can turn into pilot programs, shared IP, and venture-backed enterprises. Ohio is not starting from scratch—we are expanding a proven model.

Let me close by saying this: Economic development today is about relationships, not just incentives. HB 188 builds those relationships. It sends a message to Israeli innovators and American investors alike: Ohio is open for global business—and we know how to partner for shared prosperity.

Thank you again for considering my testimony. I urge you to support HB 188 and look forward to contributing my experience to its successful implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elad Granot', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Elad Granot

Economic Development Leader, Business School Dean, and Expert in U.S.–Israel Trade Partnerships