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Chairman James M. Hoops, Vice-Chair Brian Lorenz, Ranking Member Munira Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee

The Ohio Statehouse

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Hoops, et al:

My name is Dan Foley, I am retired from 30-plus years of local government service, including eighteen years as an elected official in Montgomery County, having served as Montgomery County Clerk of Courts and as a three-term Montgomery County Commissioner.

I am writing in support of House Bill 188 to create the Ohio Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership.

My views here are my own, as I no longer serve in an elected capacity for Montgomery County, Ohio.

Montgomery County, the City of Dayton, and the Dayton Development Coalition formed the Dayton Region Israel Trade Alliance in 2008. At that time, our region was suffering from the effects of the Great Recession, like many areas of the country. In 2007, for example, the NCR Corporation, a Fortune 500 corporation, moved out of state, and in 2008 our largest automobile manufacturing facility, General Motors Truck and Bus in Moraine, closed. At its peak, the GM plant provided employment for approximately 5,000 people.

It was our belief then, and my belief now, that we are best served in the Dayton region, and throughout Ohio, if we work to build as diverse an economy as possible. In other words, it's in our best interest to seek investment from multiple industry sectors to make sure that we're not too reliant on one sector, resulting in ample opportunities for meaningful employment.

Part of this economic diversity needs to involve seeking out international economic partnerships. Because Dayton is home to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, a strong advanced manufacturing base, and many top-notch colleges and universities, and a strong labor force, we're well suited to "tell our story," to the rest of the world, as we seek relationships for mutual economic benefit.

This strategy, I believe, is working for the Dayton region. According to a Montgomery County economic development study released in 2020, over 18,000 local jobs are supported by internationally owned businesses in seventeen countries, with total exports (2017) hitting \$4.7 billion. The top five exporting industries from that study from the Dayton area are aircraft products and parts, industrial machinery, miscellaneous general purpose machinery, motor vehicle parts, and chemicals.

Israel is an attractive economic partner for us because the country has a high number of startup companies, in every field, including agriculture, IT, advanced manufacturing, water technologies, and aerospace, to name a few. They have strong industry associations and education partners. For us, like all of our economic strategies, the goal was, and I believe, still is, to help fuel job growth and investment in our region.

The Dayton Region Israel Trade Alliance, according to a recent study, has generated over \$54 million in revenue for Dayton firms, with 93 full-time jobs created. The effort has facilitated 100+ business missions between Dayton and Israel.

**Several examples of successes from Dayton region firms:**

- LION Group opened a chem-bio manufacturing line in Dayton, creating 40 jobs. LION also was contracted to build a fire/rescue training and simulation center in Israel.
- Tool Tech won a \$230,000 contract with an Israeli defense company.
- Vandalia-based Projects Unlimited secured partnerships with major Israeli aerospace and defense companies.
- Sinclair College partnered with Israeli company SIMLAT to build out a UAS simulation and training program as part of its National UAS Training and Simulation Center.
- Strix Drones is producing drone units in Washington on the campus of Dayton-based RAM Precision.

House Bill 188 could help foster economic growth in our regions between Ohio and Israel for many reasons, including:

- Local communities don't always have the bandwidth, so to speak, to seek out international economic opportunities. State coordination would improve coordination of industry sectors in both countries in a much easier way than if local communities had to do this on their own. Local communities would still have to do the work to find companies and partners who are interested in the possibility of international trade, but state coordination, whether it's in Israel, or Ireland, with the recent formation of the Ohio Ireland Trade Commission, for example, could better foster two-way economic partnerships between both countries.

- It takes time to build long term relationships. The Dayton region started this work in 2008. And even then, this work is difficult because sometimes there's inherent complexities that exist when two parties are doing business when they're thousands of miles apart. Not every discussion will bear fruit, but some will. With state involvement, the ability to help regions maneuver some of these complexities, will be helpful to local jurisdictions.
- By having JobsOhio and the Department of Development at the table with this structure, more smaller and mid-size companies could better understand how they could start conversations leading to new business with Israeli firms.

The formation of the Ohio Israel Trade and Innovation partnership could lead to new economic investment and new jobs in our state. Ohio has done very well by attracting foreign companies from all over the world and we should continue to seek out new investment in this manner. HB 188 could help continue this trend. I would ask for your support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Dan Foley