

# **Proponent Testimony | HB 188**

## **Ohio Israel Trade & Innovation Partnership**

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Victory Church, Coitsville, OH  
Ohio House of Representatives | Development Committee  
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Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of House Bill 188.

My name is Pastor Juan Rivera. I serve a growing and diverse congregation in Northeast Ohio and also sit on the Ohio Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs. But today, I come before you not in any official capacity, but as a concerned and hopeful citizen, and as a Christian pastor who deeply values the partnership between Ohio and the State of Israel.

At a time when our world feels increasingly divided, this legislation offers something rare: a bold and constructive step toward unity, progress, and mutual prosperity. HB 188 is not just an economic bill—it is a statement of values. It says that Ohio is a state that honors innovation, strengthens international alliances, and seeks the welfare of all its people.

From a faith perspective, I believe in the biblical call to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6). That prayer is not merely spiritual—it has practical application. Peace is built through partnership. And this bill builds those bridges: in medicine, in water technology, in aerospace, and in agriculture.

This partnership can create jobs for our communities, open doors for Ohio-based entrepreneurs, and provide meaningful opportunities for collaboration with one of the most innovative nations on earth. Our own Youngstown Business Incubator has already seen the fruit of partnerships with Israeli firms in advanced manufacturing and medical devices. It’s working—and HB 188 allows us to scale that success across the state.

Moreover, this legislation provides a tangible way for our state to stand against the rise of antisemitism, not just in word but in deed. By investing in mutual progress, we affirm our solidarity with Israel and our commitment to a future built on cooperation, not division.

I urge you to move this bill forward. The dividends for Ohio—economically, ethically, and diplomatically—will echo for generations.

Thank you for your time and for your leadership.