

Written Testimony of Jan Nesor, PhD
HB188 Ohio-Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership
Ohio House Development Committee
October 27, 2025

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee, and members of the Development Committee

Chair and members of the committee, my name is Jan Nesor, I'm a resident of Columbus, and an emeritus professor at the Ohio State University. To be clear, I do not represent Ohio State University, and am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I strongly oppose HB188 and urge the Committee to reject it.

The strategy reflected in this legislation of creating ad hoc Commissions targeting single countries (first Ireland, now Israel, who next?), then packing those commissions with partisans of the countries rather than impartial analysts, is *not* a viable approach to developing international trade and investment relations that benefit Ohio. If a commission to expand international economic relations is needed at all it should have a global focus and have a membership representative of the full scope of Ohio's economy so that it can be responsive to rapidly changing global economic and political conditions (e.g., the Trump administration's tariffs).

The selection of Israel as a focal country, moreover, does not make economic sense. Israel's economy is in bad shape and its credit ratings have been downgraded.¹ The country is not a top trading partner of Ohio,^{2 3} and although it is understandable that Israeli business and governmental actors might want Ohio to invest in their country, it is not clear why they would want to invest in Ohio. Indeed, a current focus of Israeli government policy is to stop the "brain drain" and the flight of industry from the country.⁴ Stronger cases could probably be made for exploring deeper relations with countries such as India (which accounts for the largest foreign-born population in Ohio), or Japan (which has the largest FDI in the state).

The proposed legislation does not represent an efficient or effective way to improve Ohio's international economic relations. At most it simply helps legitimize Israel and throws support to its troubled economy at a time when the country's illegal annexations and genocidal actions have earned it international opprobrium.

The Committee should focus instead on Ohio's priorities and develop strategies to address the pressing needs of the state, such as the economic disaster unfolding for Ohio farmers.⁵ I urge you to move away from the agenda reflected in the proposed legislation and reject HB188.

¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/fitch-downgrades-israels-credit-rating-warning-war-could-last-well-into-2025/>, <https://thecradle.co/articles/israel-looking-at-66bn-war-bill-as-economic-woes-deepen>

² <https://www.worldstopexports.com/ohios-top-10-exports/>

³ The survey that Rep. Synenberg references in his testimony regarding Israel as being 4th in terms of 'start-ups' (<https://ceoworld.biz/2024/04/09/ranked-worlds-most-startup-friendly-countries-2024/>) is clearly outdated and irrelevant. It lists the UK, the economy of which is imploding, as being #2.

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomerniv/2025/07/09/israels-evolution-from-startup-nation-to-crypto-nation/>

⁵ <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2025/09/30/ohio-family-farmers-describe-life-under-trump-tariffs-were-in-a-hell-of-a-mess-here/>