

**Proponent Testimony in Support of
HB 188: Creating the Ohio-Israel Trade & Innovation Partnership
Ohio Senate | Finance Committee
May 12, 2026 | Columbus, OH**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Background and Statement of Interest

It is my privilege to once again submit testimony before you, this time in support of legislation that will prove a game changer for Ohio. As you know, Ohio Jewish Communities is the statewide, bipartisan government advocacy voice of Ohio's eight Jewish community federations and the hundreds of nonprofits providing cultural, educational, health and behavioral health, religious, and other human services to thousands of Ohioans, of every faith – and of none – every day. Ohio Jewish Communities submits this testimony on their behalf as well.

HB 188, like its companion bill here in the Senate, SB 200, envisions merging Ohio's leading economic verticals with Israeli innovation. It's a chance for Ohio to increase the state's economic development and workforce development efforts as well as to provide a boost to university level research, and produce the best-in-class products, many of which will have a dual-use. All in all, it's a triple win for jobs and opportunities across Ohio.

To our prime sponsors of HB 188, Reps. Hall and Synenberg, and the prime sponsors of SB 200, Senators Brenner and Weinstein, as well as the 40 other co-sponsors of HB 188¹, we could not be more proud of the bipartisan support this legislation has received to date from every corner of Ohio.

Who Else Supports the Bill

There are good reasons for this:

First, beyond the dozens of co-sponsors, the bill enjoys the support of Ohio's business community including the Ohio Business Roundtable, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Life Sciences Association, Dayton Development Coalition, Parallax Advanced Research, University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College, and Youngstown Business Incubator.

As well, we know that other states, including those that are Ohio's direct competitors in certain industries, or are the state's neighbors, are already doing exactly these kinds of collaborations and strategic partnerships, and they are winning.

¹ Leader Dani Isaacsohn, Reps. Cindy Abrams, Tim Barhorst, Adam C. Bird, Sean P. Brennan, Karen Brownlee, Gary Click, Kellie Deeter, Steve Demetriou, Michael D. Dovilla, Sarah Fowler Arthur, Haraz N. Ghanbari, Jennifer Gross, Adam Holmes, James M. Hoops, Dontavius L. Jarrells, Marilyn John, Angela N. King, Roy Klopfenstein, Beth Lear, Adam Mathews, Ty D. Mathews, Melanie Miller, Johnathan Newman, Mike Odioso, Bob Peterson, Beryl Brown Piccolantonio, Justin Pizzulli, Phil Plummer, Tracy M. Richardson, C. Allison Russo, Jodi Salvo, Nick Santucci, Jean Schmidt, Jason Stephens, Brian Stewart, David Thomas, Josh Williams, Bernard Willis, and Tom Young.

Finally, even our opponents support this bill, in concept. Yes, when questioned by your colleagues in the House on this bill, and similar legislation to create the Ohio International Trade Commission, they admit they support everything this bill proposes to do. Even they agree it's important for the state to do it. However, they are quite clear on the two reasons they oppose the bill: they don't want you partnering with Israel and they don't want to see you working with Ohio's Jewish community leaders. But on the merits of the legislation, they agree, the concepts are a win-win-win for Ohio, for our state's workforce, and for other international partners.

What the Bill Proposes To Do

It's very simple. This legislation will create a commission to strengthen bilateral, and multilateral, collaborations with Israel. Focusing on academic cooperation, research and development partnerships, and workforce development, this legislation will bring field-tested technologies to Ohio.

Do Such Efforts Work Elsewhere?

The short answer is yes. There's a good reason economic development leaders, business advocacy groups, and higher education leaders across Ohio want to see this legislation enacted into law. In many of the areas that Ohio's economy is leading in, from aerospace and defense, defenstetech, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, drones and unmanned systems, biotech and medical devices (including smart mobility), and more, Israel is a natural innovation partner. That's especially true since almost all of these verticals have a dual use potential in aging, agriculture, education, health and life sciences, among other areas.

And, it's why other states – direct peer competitors to Ohio – already do the types of efforts this legislation would facilitate and support.

For instance:

Arizona

Via the Arizona Israel Technology Alliance (AITA, est. 2018) and a state trade office in Tel Aviv opened in 2019, Arizona has built deep bilateral ties centered on aerospace and defense, UAS/unmanned systems, and semiconductors. Major Israeli-partnership employers in Arizona include Intel, Raytheon, Honeywell, and Microchip Technology² — with Raytheon alone employing 15,000 Arizonans while co-producing the Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems with Rafael Advanced Defense Systems. Arizona exports roughly \$235 million in aerospace products and \$40 million in

² Texas Economic Development Corporation (TxEDC), "Israel Investment in Texas," businessintexas.com. Cumulative FDI from Israel, January 2011–December 2023: 33–34 projects, \$2.687–\$3.2 billion in capital investment, 4,957 jobs created by 27 companies. The Governor of Texas's office has stated that Israeli companies have invested \$3.2 billion in Texas over the past decade (as cited in 5W Research, Apr. 30, 2026).

semiconductors annually to Israel³, and bilateral trade totaled \$460 million in 2018 — more than double the 2010 level — with 20 Israeli-owned companies operating in the state⁴.

Ohio shares every one of these strengths: Wright-Patterson AFB and the Dayton defense corridor, Rickenbacker ANG base, our growing drone/UAS manufacturing base, and semiconductor fabrication capacity. The Raytheon–Rafael Iron Dome partnership model — a U.S. state’s defense industry co-producing battle-proven Israeli technology that saves lives in Jerusalem and in Abu Dhabi — is what Ohio companies could hope for with HB 188.

Colorado

The Colorado-Israel Chamber of Commerce (COIL, est. 2024) focuses on aerospace and defense, bioscience and medical technologies, and advanced manufacturing. Colorado is home to more than 200 defense and aerospace companies, and COIL has organized aerospace delegations to Israel and brokers BIRD Foundation co-funding (grants funded in partnership by the US federal government and Israel providing up to \$1.5 million per joint U.S.–Israel innovation project). The COIL model — stood up in under two years — already connects Colorado companies with Israeli counterparts across space-tech, cybersecurity, and biotech. From NASA Glenn to Starlab and the Brook Park project, Anduril and JOBY, Ohio has an equivalent or larger footprint in these sectors. HB 188 provides the ability for the state to move faster still to create and deepen these connections.

Florida

Florida’s partnership with Israel is among the most quantified in the country. According to the USIBA Florida–Israel Economic Impact Report (April 2025, based on 2024 data), 429 Israeli-founded businesses in Florida directly employ 8,190 people⁵. When supply-chain spending and employee household expenditures are included, total employment impact reaches 26,510 jobs, and these companies generate \$7.3 billion in gross economic output — equal to 0.46% of Florida’s entire Gross State Product. Employees of Israeli-founded firms earn 12% more than the Florida state average⁶. Sectors leading the Florida-Israel partnership include aerospace (via the Space Florida–Israel Innovation Authority program, \$22M+ jointly funded since 2013), life sciences and healthtech, cybersecurity, and agritech.

Indiana

Indiana is Ohio’s most direct peer. Just weeks ago, in April 2026, Governor Braun launched Iron Nation–Indiana, a \$60+ million initiative (\$15 million in state funds, \$30+ million from the Iron Nation venture platform) to attract Israeli technology companies to establish U.S. headquarters and operations

³ 5W Public Relations, “Israeli Tech in Texas,” full research report, 5wpr.com/research/israeli-tech-texas, Apr. 30, 2026. Two-way merchandise trade between Texas and Israel reached \$4 billion in 2024 (\$757.9 million in Texas exports, \$3.2 billion in imports). Named companies include Elbit Systems of America (Fort Worth), Alon USA Energy / Delek US Holdings (Dallas), NICE Systems, Wiz (Austin presence), SentinelOne, Hippo (insurtech, TX HQ), Cellebrite, Salt Security, Pagaya, Forter, Verbit, and Innoviz.

⁴ Office of Gov. Doug Ducey, “Governor Ducey Announces Opening of Arizona-Israel Trade and Investment Office in Tel Aviv,” Nov. 8, 2019. At the time, 20 Israeli-owned companies were operating in Arizona. Arizona-Israel bilateral trade totaled \$460 million in 2018, more than doubling since 2010.

⁵ United States–Israel Business Alliance (USIBA), Florida–Israel Economic Impact Report, Apr. 2025 (based on 2024 data). The report was compiled using independent economic and workforce analysis by ABLE Operations. spaceflorida.gov/israel-innovation-authority-partnership confirms \$22M+ jointly funded since 2013.

⁶ USIBA, Florida–Israel Economic Impact Report, Apr. 2025. The total economic footprint including supply chain and employee household spending is 26,510 jobs. Employees of Israeli-founded firms earn 12% above the state average wage.

in Indiana⁷. Targeted sectors — life sciences, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, defense, and research university collaborations — map exactly onto Ohio’s economy. Indiana’s partners include AM General (South Bend), major healthcare systems, and the state’s research universities. The IEDC is already identifying the first cohort of Israeli companies to land. As you know, Indiana, like Ohio, is a Midwest manufacturing state retooling for 21st Century innovation.

New Jersey

Since 2018, Israeli FDI (foreign direct investment) in New Jersey has grown by \$447 million — a 36% increase — and bilateral trade rose 11% in 2022 alone. Israeli investments created 1,425 jobs at companies including Teva Pharmaceuticals (U.S. HQ in Parsippany, 1,000+ jobs), Bluevine, Kornit Digital, and OwnBackup⁸. New Jersey is the 5th-largest U.S. trading partner of Israel and ranked 2nd in the Northeast for Israeli greenfield FDI. Teva chose New Jersey — rather than New York or another state — directly as a result of Governor Murphy’s trade mission to Israel in 2018⁹. New Jersey also operates NJ BASE — the New Jersey Business Acceleration and Soft Landing Ecosystem — a fully subsidized landing pad for international companies entering the U.S. market. Run through the NJEDA and operated by SOSA, NJ BASE provides free co-working space in Jersey City, a Business Immersion Program connecting participants directly to New Jersey’s innovation ecosystem, and targeted business support services, accommodating 12 to 20 companies at a time¹⁰. Israeli and other international startups entering the U.S. market can land in New Jersey at zero cost and with immediate institutional support. HB 188 seeks to offer similar competitive advantages for Ohio.

New York

New York’s economic impact figures from Israeli-founded companies are the gold standard against which every other state measures itself. According to USIBA’s New York–Israel Economic Impact Report (2025, based on 2024 data), 648 Israeli-founded companies across New York State directly employed more than 28,000 people and supported 57,000 total jobs including supply-chain and household spending effects. In New York City alone, 590 Israeli-founded companies directly created 27,471 jobs at an average income of \$160,126 — generating \$8.1 billion in total earnings, \$12.4 billion in value added, and \$17.9 billion in gross economic output¹¹. NYC is home to 20 Israeli-founded unicorns, including Fireblocks (\$8 billion valuation) and Wiz (acquired by Alphabet for \$32 billion in

⁷ IEDC press release, “Governor Braun Announces Launch of Iron Nation–Indiana,” Apr. 13, 2026, iedc.in.gov. The \$60M initiative (\$15M state + \$30M+ Iron Nation) targets life sciences, advanced manufacturing, defense, and research university collaborations.

⁸ Choose New Jersey, “Choose New Jersey Opens Office in Israel,” Mar. 21, 2023; NJ Department of State press release, Mar. 23, 2023. Israeli FDI in NJ grew \$447 million (36%) from 2018–2022 under Gov. Murphy. Named employers: Teva Pharmaceuticals (Parsippany, 1,000+ jobs), Bluevine, Kornit Digital, OwnBackup.

⁹ Choose New Jersey, “Why Israeli Companies Are Choosing New Jersey,” choosenj.com (updated 2024). NJ ranked 5th largest trading partner of Israel and 2nd in the Northeast for Israeli greenfield FDI.

¹⁰ Choose New Jersey, “New Jersey Business Acceleration and Soft Landing Ecosystem (NJ BASE),” choosenj.com/financing-incentives/new-jersey-business-acceleration-and-soft-landing-ecosystem/ (last updated Apr. 30, 2026). NJ BASE is an NJEDA program operated by SOSA, located in Jersey City, providing free co-working space and a Business Immersion Program to international companies scaling U.S. operations, accommodating 12–20 companies at a time.

¹¹ USIBA, New York–Israel Economic Impact Report (ABLE Operations, commissioned 2025; data from 2024). See also Times of Israel, “Nearly 600 Israeli Companies Have Created 27,000 Jobs in NYC,” Oct. 28, 2025; CTech, “From Wiz to Fireblocks: Israeli-Founded Startups Power \$19.5 Billion Boost to New York’s Economy,” Oct. 27, 2025.

2025)¹². Ohio competes directly with New York for Israeli investment in cybersecurity, healthtech, fintech, and defense. Israeli entrepreneurs naming New York or Florida as locations for expansion, but not Ohio, is not merely an anecdote. It is reflected in \$19.5 billion in annual economic output going to New York. Part of that, could be coming right here to Ohio.

Texas

Texas may be the fastest-growing Israeli tech destination in the country. The 5W Research “Israeli Tech in Texas” report (April 2026) documents 80+ named Israeli technology companies establishing Texas operations from 2020 to 2026, with \$3.2 billion invested, 4,200+ direct jobs, and \$4 billion in 2024 bilateral trade¹³. Anchor employers include Elbit Systems of America (Fort Worth), Alon USA Energy/Delek, NICE Systems, and Texas Venture Partners’ \$50 million Israeli defense-tech fund in Austin. Key sectors are cybersecurity, AI and enterprise software, defense and dual-use technology, energy and cleantech, and advanced manufacturing. Texas announced it would open a formal trade office in Jerusalem in 2025 and has built structured pathways to help Israeli defense-tech startups navigate U.S. defense procurement¹⁴. Ohio’s defense industrial base (Wright-Patterson, AFRL, Elbit’s own supply chain), advanced manufacturing corridor, and growing cybersecurity ecosystem represent the same asset mix Texas is using to win. HB 188 will put Ohio in the room.

International and Multilateral Opportunities through HB 188

In addition, for Ohio, this legislation provides something not necessarily envisioned by other states in their efforts. Israel remains a gateway for technological cooperation to many areas of the world most in demand today. The Emirati-Israeli partnership is stronger than ever, and poised for expansion¹⁵. This is especially so in the wake of the recent war with Iran¹⁶ where the Emirates became the prime target for Tehran’s missile barrages and drone attacks¹⁷. Israel and Ukraine have launched a dedicated bilateral security dialogue and are deepening cooperation in defense technology, cybersecurity, energy, agriculture, and healthcare — with bilateral trade nearing \$1 billion in 2024¹⁸. Germany, Greece,

¹² USIBA New York report (ibid.). NYC accounts for 590 of the 648 statewide Israeli-founded companies. The 20 Israeli-founded unicorns headquartered in NYC include Fireblocks (\$8B valuation) and BigID (\$1.2B). Average income per job: \$160,126 including benefits and bonuses.

¹³ 5W Public Relations, “Israeli Tech in Texas” research report, Apr. 30, 2026, [5wpr.com/research/israeli-tech-texas](https://www.5wpr.com/research/israeli-tech-texas). Headline figures: \$3.2B invested, 4,200+ direct jobs, \$4B in 2024 bilateral trade. 80+ named Israeli-tech companies documented with Texas operations 2020–2026.

¹⁴ Texas Senate Concurrent Resolution 24 (SCR 24), passed March 2025, called on the Governor’s Economic Development and Tourism Office to establish a trade office in Jerusalem. See The Media Line, Oct. 16, 2025 (ibid.); The Jerusalem Post, “Texas is America’s New Defense-Tech Powerhouse,” Mar. 8, 2026.

¹⁵ The Abraham Accords (Sept. 2020) normalized relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. Since normalization, the UAE-Israel relationship has expanded into AI, fintech, agritech, healthcare, and defense co-production. UAE’s G42 and Israel’s Rafael, Elbit, and leading cybersecurity firms have deepened joint ventures. UAE-Israel trade exceeded \$3 billion in 2023. See U.S. Embassy Jerusalem, Fact Sheet U.S.–Israel Economic Relationship; Times of Israel, “UAE-Israel Trade Tops \$3 Billion,” 2024.

¹⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/05/01/middleeast/israel-uae-middle-east-alliances-opec-intl>

¹⁷ <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/5797101-uae-targeted-iran-attacks/>

¹⁸ Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar visited Kyiv on July 23, 2025, meeting with President Zelensky and Foreign Minister Sybiha. The two countries announced a dedicated bilateral security dialogue focused on defense technology, cybersecurity, energy, agriculture, and healthcare cooperation. Sa’ar and Sybiha noted that Ukraine-Israel trade increased more than 65% in 2024, nearing \$1 billion. See Kyiv Post, “Ukraine and Israel Strengthen Strategic Partnership,” July 24, 2025; Jerusalem Post, July 23, 2025.

Cyprus, and Slovenia are among other European partners of note with Israel¹⁹. Israel's Asian collaborations include Korea and Japan, India and Singapore²⁰. And most recently, on April 19, 2026, Argentina's President Milei and Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu jointly launched the Isaac Accords — a diplomatic and strategic framework modeled on the Abraham Accords, deepening cooperation in security, AI and technology, trade, and democratic values across the Western Hemisphere²¹. Each of these are countries and regions Ohio's industrial base, its research universities, and its most promising startups would benefit from closer collaboration with, both bilaterally and multilaterally. HB 188 is a mechanism to make that happen.

What the Bill Does Not Do

Finally, a quick word to respond to significant misinformation from opponents of this bill.

The bill does not send money to Israel. There was a GRF appropriation in an earlier version, now removed in this substitute bill, but even that funding from Ohio was intended to be directed to Ohio colleges, businesses, and research institutions for an Ohio share of collaboration.

The bill does not opine on foreign policy. The United States and the State of Ohio conduct business with hundreds of allied and neutral nations around the world. Doing so does not imply support that country's every policy decision or national security determination. There are undoubtedly Canadian policy positions many in Ohio disagree with. One cannot imagine the opponents of this bill trying to force Ohio to stop trade and commerce with Canada.

The bill does not force anyone to support political positions they disagree with. No one is forced to work with Israel, or any of the dozens of countries that currently partner with Israel on life saving and game changing technology.

¹⁹ Israel has been an associated member of the EU's Horizon Europe research and innovation framework since December 2021, enabling joint projects with Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, and other EU member states. Slovenia launched a government-backed Israel-Slovenia Startup Accelerator in 2021 (second cohort 2023), run by SPIRIT Slovenia and the Slovene Enterprise Fund in partnership with the Slovenian Embassy in Tel Aviv. Greece and Cyprus have deep bilateral defense and energy cooperation with Israel, including joint naval exercises and the EastMed energy corridor. See European Commission, "International Cooperation with Israel in Research and Innovation," research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu; PRNewswire, "Arieli Capital and the Slovenia Government Launch Second Slovenia-Israel Accelerator," May 12, 2023.

²⁰ Israel-India: In June 2022, the two countries adopted a "vision statement" on defense co-development and co-production, including joint UAV and missile programs. India is Israel's largest defense export market. Israel-South Korea: BIRD Foundation Korea program; Korea's KAI and Israel's Elbit have partnered on avionics and defense electronics. Israel-Japan: Japan-Israel Innovation Network (JIN) and joint BIRD-Japan programs since 2019 in cybersecurity and agritech. Israel-Singapore: bilateral R&D agreement; Singapore companies partner with Israel Innovation Authority-funded startups in fintech and smart cities. See Israel Innovation Authority, Annual Report 2024; Indian Ministry of Defence press release, June 2, 2022.

²¹ Isaac Accords, signed Jerusalem, Apr. 19, 2026, by Argentine President Javier Milei and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Accords establish a strategic framework for cooperation in security (counter-terrorism, counter-Iran), AI and technology (MOU on supercomputing and joint R&D), trade and economic openness, and alignment in international forums. U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee attended the signing ceremony. El Al announced non-stop Buenos Aires-Tel Aviv service beginning Dec. 2026. See Embassy of Israel in Washington, "Israel and Argentina Announce the Launching of the Isaac Accords," Apr. 19, 2026; DLA Piper, "The Isaac Accords: Argentina's New Strategic Framework with Israel," Apr. 2026; Times of Israel, Apr. 19, 2026; AJC, "What To Know About the Isaac Accords," May 2026.

Next Steps

This bill has been through a thorough committee process in the House, including several substantive changes to the bill. The bill then passed the House in an overwhelmingly positive, bipartisan floor vote. The Senate, via this hearing today, is in the midst of their own thorough vetting. Because jobs and the economy is among the most important issues facing the General Assembly today, we urge this committee to favorably report this bill to Rules & Reference as soon as possible, to ensure time for a floor vote ahead of the recess.

We are of course available to answer any questions or to provide additional information. Thank you again for your time and for this opportunity.

Howie Beigelman, submitted on behalf of Ohio Jewish Communities

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HB 188 – OHIO ISRAEL TRADE & INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP

Supporting Organizations

