

BILL SUMMARY

April 2014

The United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act (H.R. 938 and S. 462)

By a resounding vote of 410-1, the House on March 5 passed the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act (H.R. 938), which dramatically strengthens cooperation between the United States and Israel as they work to confront new threats and challenges in the Middle East. The Senate version of the bill (S. 462) remains pending.

The legislation—co-sponsored by Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Ted Deutch (D-FL) in the House and by Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) in the Senate—declares that Israel is a “major strategic partner” of the United States. This designation lays the foundation for expanded U.S.-Israel ties in a wide variety of spheres, including defense, intelligence, homeland security, energy, science and trade.

Key Provisions

- Declares that Israel is a “major strategic partner” of the United States.
- Expands authority for forward-deployed U.S. weapons stockpiles in Israel, providing important military equipment for either to use in a crisis.
- Upgrades Israel’s trade status to expedite export licensing.
- Encourages the inclusion of Israel in the Visa Waiver Program.
- Authorizes the president to provide assistance to Israel promoting cooperation in such fields as energy, water, homeland security, and agriculture.
- The House legislation encourages continued American assistance for the Iron Dome rocket defense system as well as the David’s Sling and Arrow anti-missile systems.
- The House legislation creates new mechanisms to connect America and Israel in enhanced energy cooperation, including the establishment of a U.S.-Israel Center of Excellence in energy and water engineering, and supports the development of R&D and academic partnership opportunities. These provisions are also included in a separate Senate bill (S. 1491) that will likely be incorporated into the Strategic Partnership Act.