

March 30, 2018

## **New U.S.-Israel Center of Excellence Included in Omnibus Bill**

On March 23, Congress passed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which included a key pro-Israel provision establishing a U.S.-Israel Center of Excellence in energy and water technologies. According to the AIPAC News Hub, the omnibus also fully funded the U.S.-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development Energy (BIRD-Energy) program. The funding was spearheaded by Sens. John Kennedy (R-LA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Susan Collins (R-ME), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Reps. Steve Scalise (R-LA), Mike Simpson (R-ID), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), and Brad Sherman (D-CA). "This is the highest level of funding for joint U.S-Israel energy programs in our countries' histories. Funding these two programs will further assist our nations in achieving energy independence, and will improve our environment and national security," Rep. Sherman said. "In the future, when somebody hears that something big has happened in Israel, they will ask: what did the Israelis invent and how many lives will it save?"