

PRESS RELEASE

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AIPAC Applauds Bipartisan House Letter Supporting Israel's Quest for Peace and Right to Self-Defense *Move Joins Similar Letter from 78 Senators*

AIPAC released the following statement praising a bipartisan House letter highlighting American support for Israel and her peace efforts, sent to the president Friday by 268 members of the House of Representatives. The House action follows a similar overwhelming bipartisan show of support for Israel by the Senate, who sent a parallel letter to the president on Tuesday. The letters also reaffirm Israel's right to self-defense and call on the Arab states to demonstrate their support for historic compromise and reconciliation with the Jewish state on the part of the Palestinians, while isolating Hamas and other rejectionists.

AIPAC applauds Congress for sending a strong bipartisan signal of American support for Israel's quest for peace, and calling on Arab states to fulfill their responsibilities to the peace process by reaching out to Israel and supporting the moderate Palestinian leadership financially and politically, while isolating Hamas and other terrorist and rejectionist elements. The House letter sent to the president today comes just as more than three-quarters of the Senate sent a similar letter to the White House underscoring America's overwhelming bipartisan support for Israel.

The House effort was co-authored by House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard Berman (D-CA), House Republican Whip Roy Blunt (R-MO) and House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), and signed by 268 members of the House. Like the Senate version, which was signed by over three-quarters of that body, the House letter also reaffirms American support for Israel's right to self-defense and underscores U.S. support for the State of Israel in her quest for peace and security.

Demonstrating Congress' bipartisan solidarity with Israel in the face continued hostility, the letters also call for the United States to remain in Israel's corner at United Nations – where one-sided, anti-Israel sentiment is rampant.

Saying the United States must continue our strong support for the Jewish state in the face of continued threats, more than half of the House tells the president, "We urge you to continue your efforts to advance the Israel/Palestinian negotiations, to support Israel's right to self defense against the growing threats from Gaza, and demand that the Arab states do far more to support those negotiations."

"The House has spoken with a clear and unified voice – AIPAC applauds their powerful call to support Israel in her quest for peace with all her Arab neighbors, while recognizing that our ally's security and her right and responsibility of self-defense is paramount in that dangerous and unpredictable part of the world," said Josh Block, AIPAC's spokesman.

On Tuesday, 77 senators, including presumptive Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain, sent a similar letter, authored by Sens. Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Susan Collins (R-ME), to President Bush. Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) reinforced the Senate letter with an additional letter of his own.

To view a copy of the House and Senate letters, as well as Senator Obama's, supporting Israel in her quest for peace, please visit AIPAC's website at: <http://www.aipac.org/694.asp#12668>.

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