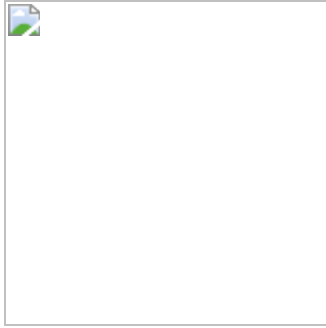




July 14, 2026

Dear Colleague:

I write in connection with United States policy toward Israel, the Palestinian people and in the Middle East.

Consistent with the position articulated by Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee Greg Meeks and pro-peace organizations like J Street, I will be voting no on Republican Amendment #8 being offered to the National Security, Department of State and Related Programs Appropriations Act. As written, it is overly broad in that it prohibits or would limit the use of funds for longstanding initiatives related to humanitarian aid, refugee resettlement, peace-building and U.S. Embassy operations. In addition, the so-called Massie amendment would restrict our country's ability to confront Hamas, Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations in the region who are sworn enemies of both the United States and Israel.

In my view, there are more decisive ways to achieve the urgent change necessary when it comes to the far-right Netanyahu government. Republican leaders are desperately trying to weaponize an amendment they do not support for nakedly partisan reasons. However, given the strongly held views throughout the Caucus in this important area of foreign policy, we are not whipping this vote.

Based on the extensive conversations we have had as a Caucus, there are good faith reasons that will result in Members voting in a variety of different ways with respect to the amendment. Moving forward, it is my strongly held view that for the good of Israel and the Palestinian people, American policy in the Middle East must change.

Commitment to a Just and Lasting Peace

The far-right Netanyahu government has isolated Israel from much of the world, severely damaged its standing in the U.S., jeopardized normalization efforts in the region and repeatedly undermined prospects for peace. A major reset is necessary based on two core principles.

To begin with, America's commitment to Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state and homeland for the Jewish people must remain ironclad. Equally significant, the United States must strongly support the creation of an independent Palestinian state that provides dignity, respect and self-determination for the Palestinian people. A process to achieve that goal, ultimately including regional partnerships similar to the Abraham Accords, should be set into motion forthwith.

Gaza and the West Bank

There must be a complete reconstruction and modernization of Gaza. Humanitarian assistance should be surged to alleviate the suffering that Palestinian civilians have experienced as a result of the devastating war. Hamas must be disarmed and removed from power. Financial resources to support peace-building efforts between Israel and the Palestinian people should be enhanced. Economic development efforts in the West Bank and Gaza must be substantially strengthened.

As outlined in H.R. 3045, legislation I support, West Bank settlement activity and expansion is illegal under international law. The reprehensible settler violence against the Palestinian people must end. All perpetrators of this violence, settlers or otherwise, should be sanctioned and held criminally accountable.

The Future of the Memorandum of Understanding

The current 10-year Memorandum of Understanding entered into by President Barack Obama and the Israeli government in 2016 expires imminently. A meaningful change in direction is needed.

Israel has an advanced economy and is capable of paying for its own sophisticated weapons, as the Prime Minister recently acknowledged. Accordingly, any future security arrangement between our two countries should be structured consistently with defense agreements that exist with our other Western allies and strictly adhere to our human rights laws and values.

At the same time, a new security arrangement should undergird the maintenance of Israel's qualitative military edge against Iran and other malign actors in the region. Mutually beneficial joint technology, innovation, research and further development of defensive programs like Iron Dome, Arrow and David's Sling should be prioritized.

Thank you for your continued leadership. I look forward to undertaking the important work we have to do together to uplift a safe and secure Israel living side by side with an independently prosperous Palestinian state.

Sincerely,

Image

Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader