

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to you in support of Israel's participation in U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which allows citizens and nationals of participating countries to travel to the United States for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa.

We are encouraged by Secretary Mayorkas' remarks last month confirming that Israel is in the "pipeline" to be added to the program. These remarks follow a bilateral meeting in August between President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, where Israel's participation in the VWP was discussed.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, visits from Israel to the United States averaged 418,000 people per year for three years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. Israeli travelers account for \$1.2 billion in spending annually, with an average \$4,000 in personal spending per trip.

CBP's Visa Waiver Program allows expedited entry upon arrival to the United States for pre-approved, low-risk travelers using the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program. The VWP utilizes a risk-based, multi-layered approach to detect and prevent high-risk individuals from traveling to the United States and incorporates national-level risk assessments.

Israel's participation in this program would grow the U.S. economy, strengthen national security at each of our borders, and increase opportunities for people-to-people exchange, which bolsters our already unique bilateral relationship.

Israel would join a group of forty other allies who benefit from participation in the Visa Waiver Program.

We know you share in the goal of ensuring that the benefits that the Visa Waiver Program promises to U.S. tourism, to our country's national security, and to the U.S.-Israel relationship are realized. We therefore urge you to expediently add Israel to the Visa Waiver Program, and provide an update to Congress on the status of the current negotiations.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathleen Rice (NY-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ Michelle Fischbach (MN-07)
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace Meng (NY-06)
Member of Congress

/s/ Brian Mast (FL-18)
Member of Congress

/s/ Elaine Luria (VA-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Lee Zeldin (NY-01)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jake Auchincloss (MA-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ Don Bacon (NE-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown (MD-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Banks (IN-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Costa (CA-16)
Member of Congress

/s/ Gus M. Bilirakis (FL-12)
Member of Congress

/s/ Angie Craig (MN-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted Budd (NC-13)
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted Deutch (FL-22)
Member of Congress

/s/ Kat Cammack (FL-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05)
Member of Congress

/s/ Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25)
Member of Congress

/s/ Conor Lamb (PA-17)
Member of Congress

/s/ Andrew R. Garbarino (NY-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Kathy Manning (NC-06)
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony Gonzalez (OH-16)
Member of Congress

/s/ Stephanie Murphy (FL-07)
Member of Congress

/s/ Garret Graves (LA-06)
Member of Congress

/s/ Frank Pallone Jr. (NJ-06)
Member of Congress

/s/ H. Morgan Griffith (VA-09)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Panetta (CA-20)
Member of Congress

/s/ Chris Jacobs (NY-27)
Member of Congress

/s/ Dean Phillips (MN-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ David P. Joyce (OH-14)
Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Quigley (IL-05)
Member of Congress

/s/ Fred Keller (PA-12)
Member of Congress

/s/ Kurt Schrader (OR-05)
Member of Congress

/s/ Young Kim (CA-39)
Member of Congress

/s/ Brad Sherman (CA-30)
Member of Congress

/s/ David Kustoff (TN-08)
Member of Congress

/s/ Marilyn Strickland (WA-10)
Member of Congress

/s/ Tracey Mann (KS-01)
Member of Congress

/s/ Tom Suozzi (NY-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ David McKinley (WV-01)
Member of Congress

/s/ Dina Titus (NV-01)
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter Meijer (MI-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ Norma J. Torres (CA-35)
Member of Congress

/s/ Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D. (IA-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Ritchie Torres (NY-15)
Member of Congress

/s/ John Moolenaar (MI-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone (MD-06)
Member of Congress

/s/ Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14)
Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23)
Member of Congress

/s/ Maria Salazar (FL-27)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jennifer Wexton (VA-10)
Member of Congress

/s/ Adrian Smith (NE-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ Chris Smith (NJ-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ William Timmons (SC-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jeff Van Drew (NJ-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Ann Wagner (MO-02)
Member of Congress

/s/ Randy Weber (TX-14)
Member of Congress

/s/ Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M. (OH-02)
Member of Congress