

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 20, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

We write to you in support of Israel's participation in U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Global Entry program. Expanding Global Entry's expedited clearance process to pre-approved visitors from Israel, one of the United States' closest allies, will help strengthen our partnership while improving our ability to screen potential threats against the U.S. homeland. We note that the Israeli government is currently participating in a limited Global Entry pilot program pursuant to a 2012 bilateral agreement and is taking steps internally to become a full member. Therefore, we urge you to expedite its full membership and reciprocity for Americans as soon as Israel is ready to join the program.

Leisure and business travelers from Israel have made a significant contribution to the U.S. economy and job creation. According to the U.S. Travel Association, every \$1 million spent by international visitors has directly supported the creation of 7.9 jobs in the U.S. travel industry. In 2016, our country welcomed approximately 410,000 Israeli visitors, who spent \$1.7 billion, ranking Israel among the top 25 largest markets for U.S. travel and tourism exports according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. However, analysis by the U.S. Travel Association indicates that travel from Israel to the U.S. has recently been on the decline. With the U.S. currently capturing just 6.7 percent of the outbound Israeli travel market, as a country, we can do more to attract these visitors and Global Entry membership is an important way to welcome them.

Israel's membership in Global Entry would not only provide its passport holders a smoother visit to the U.S. but would also help to make our country safer by enhancing bilateral law enforcement cooperation. Only after rigorous scrutiny and clearance by both countries will approved Israeli travelers be extended the facility of expedited entry into the United States through self-service kiosks at U.S. airports. These procedures enhance security-related information sharing with the United States at a time when the threats we face are increasingly global in nature. Expansion of Global Entry to Israel will promote even closer security cooperation with the Israeli authorities, which can help direct CBP resources to higher-risk, unknown travelers and enforcement.

As 2018 marks the 70th anniversary of U.S.-Israel diplomatic relations, extending full Global Entry membership and reciprocity for Americans would be a fitting gesture of our continued efforts to enhance the security and economic partnership between our two nations. We strongly support Israel's membership in CBP's Global Entry program and urge the efforts towards this goal be accelerated as much as possible to help ensure the best travel experience to strengthen the bonds between our two great democracies. We also request an update on our engagement with your Israeli counterparts on this issue.

Sincerely,



MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator



JAMES M. INHOFE
United States Senator

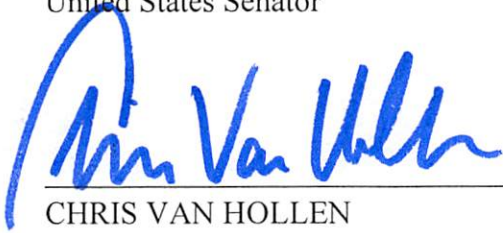
CC: Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of State



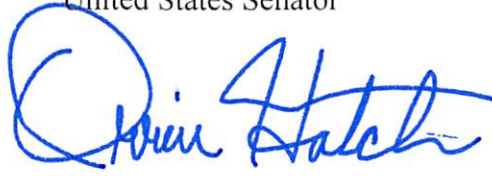
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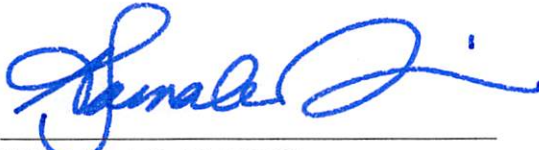
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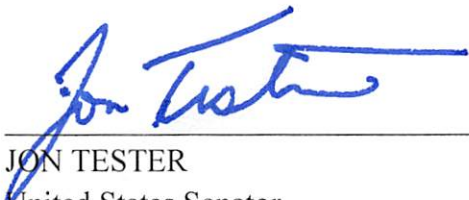
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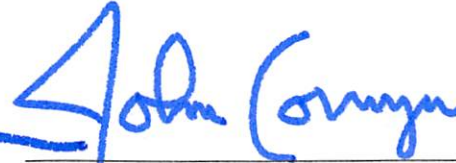
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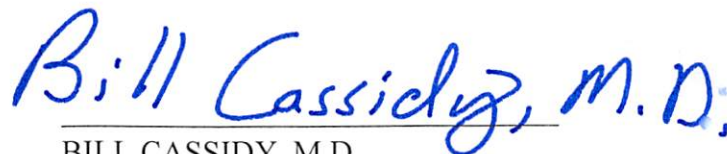
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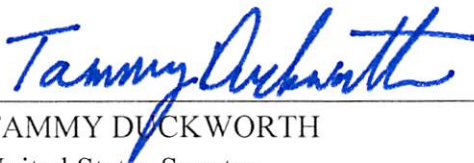
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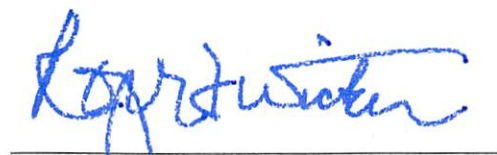

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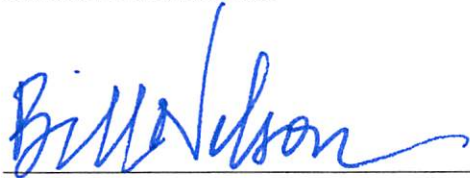

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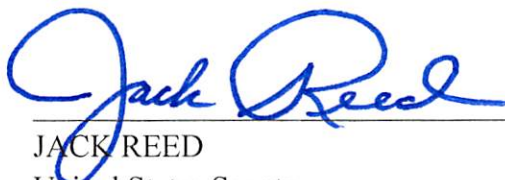
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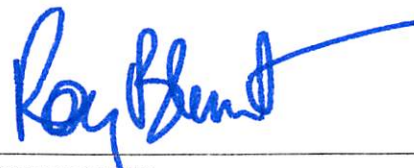
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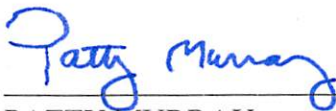
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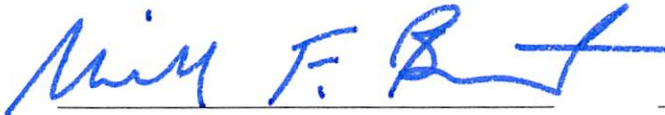
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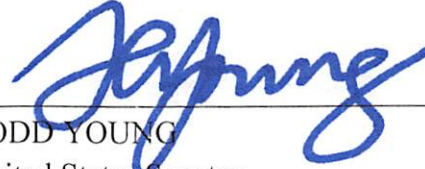
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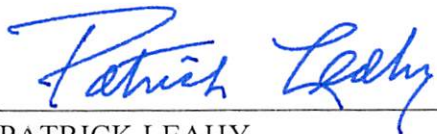
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