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

/s/ Grace Meng (NY-06)  /s/ Brian Mast (FL-18)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Elaine Luria (VA-02)  /s/ Lee Zeldin (NY-01)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Jake Auchincloss (MA-04)  /s/ Don Bacon (NE-02)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown (MD-04)  /s/ Jim Banks (IN-03)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Costa (CA-16)  /s/ Gus M. Bilirakis (FL-12)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Angie Craig (MN-02)  /s/ Ted Budd (NC-13)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Ted Deutch (FL-22)  /s/ Kat Cammack (FL-03)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05)  /s/ Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress

/s/ Conor Lamb (PA-17)  /s/ Andrew R. Garbarino (NY-02)
Member of Congress               Member of Congress
/s/ Kathy Manning (NC-06)    /s/ Anthony Gonzalez (OH-16)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Stephanie Murphy (FL-07) /s/ Garret Graves (LA-06)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Frank Pallone Jr. (NJ-06) /s/ H. Morgan Griffith (VA-09)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Panetta (CA-20)    /s/ Chris Jacobs (NY-27)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Dean Phillips (MN-03)     /s/ David P. Joyce (OH-14)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Quigley (IL-05)      /s/ Fred Keller (PA-12)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Kurt Schrader (OR-05)     /s/ Young Kim (CA-39)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Brad Sherman (CA-30)      /s/ David Kustoff (TN-08)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Marilyn Strickland (WA-10) /s/ Tracey Mann (KS-01)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Tom Suozzi (NY-03)        /s/ David McKinley (WV-01)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Dina Titus (NV-01)        /s/ Peter Meijer (MI-03)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Norma J. Torres (CA-35)   /s/ Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D. (IA-02)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress

/s/ Ritchie Torres (NY-15)    /s/ John Moolenaar (MI-04)
Member of Congress         Member of Congress
/s/ David Trone (MD-06)    /s/ Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14)  
Member of Congress    Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23)    /s/ Maria Salazar (FL-27)  
Member of Congress    Member of Congress

/s/ Jennifer Wexton (VA-10)    /s/ Adrian Smith (NE-03)  
Member of Congress    Member of Congress

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

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

/s/ Randy Weber (TX-14)    /s/ Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M. (OH-02)  
Member of Congress    Member of Congress