

Rothman Helps Secure \$ 2.61 Billion In U.S. Aid For Israel

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Ensures that Israel Will Continue to Receive the Military & Economic Assistance

Needed to Keep Its People Safe & Its Economy Thriving

Washington, DC - Continuing his fight to provide America's number one ally in the Middle East with sufficient U.S. foreign aid, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today announced he helped get the U.S. House of Representatives to pass a \$2.61 billion military, economic, and refugee assistance package for Israel. Rothman used his position as a Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, which is responsible for allocating all U.S. foreign assistance, to get the Congress to approve the funds for Israel.

"By providing Israel with \$2.61 billion, the U.S. Congress is demonstrating just how important Israel's security and economic stability is to the well-being and security of the United States," Rothman said.

Rothman worked with his colleagues on the Foreign Operations Subcommittee and the full House Appropriations Committee to secure \$2.22 billion in military assistance and \$360 million in economic assistance for the State of Israel and to extend the availability of \$9 billion of loan guarantees for an additional two years. This year, Rothman was appointed as a House Conferee to the Conference Committee on the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which enabled him to work with his Senate counterparts to finalize this important aid package for Israel.

The Fiscal Year 2005 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill also includes \$50 million for the resettlement of Russian, Eastern European, Ethiopian and other refugees in the State of Israel. Rothman strongly supported new restrictions on U.S. aid to the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides assistance to Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East. UNRWA has recently come under fire due to Commissioner-General Peter Hansen's admission that some employees of UNRWA are most likely affiliated with the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas. The measure requires UNRWA to demonstrate that it is in compliance with U.S. law that prohibits foreign assistance to terrorist organizations before it can receive additional U.S. aid.

"I was very pleased to once again use my position on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations to demonstrate to my colleagues why it is in the strategic interests of the United States to provide sufficient aid to Israel," Rothman said. "As our strategic military partner, ally, trusted friend of 56 years, and only democracy in the Middle East, Israel needs the support of the United States as it continues to fight against the threat of Palestinian terrorism and provide for a future of peace and prosperity for its people."

These funds for Israel are part of Congress' final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2005. The measure next moves to the White House where President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law.

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