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## VERMONT STATE ETHICS COMMISSION COMPLAINT FORM

The Vermont State Ethics Commission has authority to accept, review, refer, and track complaints regarding alleged violations of governmental conduct regulated by law, the Department of Human Resources Code of Ethics, and the State's campaign finance law set forth in 17 V.S.A. Ch. 61. 3 V.S.A. § 1221(a).

Anonymous complaints cannot be accepted. 3 V.S.A. § 1223(a)(2).

### Your Contact Information

Type or print clearly

Your name: Elizabeth Blum on behalf of herself and Jewish Voice for Peace VT/NH Chapter

Address: 48 Cliff Street

City/Town: Norwich

State: Vermont Zip: 05055 Email: elizblum@gmail.com

Telephone(s): 802-649-2030

### Attach additional pages as necessary.

1. Who is this complaint against? Name, job title or position. **Please file a separate complaint for each individual you complain against.**

This complaint is against Representative Matt Birong of the Vermont House of Representatives (hereafter, referred to as "Representative").

2. Date(s) the alleged violation(s): **September 14 to 19, 2025**
3. How has this person violated governmental conduct governed by law, ethics provisions, or campaign laws? Describe fully. Be specific and provide as much detail as possible. Attach any documentation that supports your claim.

The Representative violated **3 V.S.A. § 1203g** of the Vermont Code of Ethics by accepting gifts from the Israeli government to attend the "50 States, One Israel" event. These gifts are not allowed by that statute or any of its exceptions.

The gifts included:

- Travel on a chartered flight between JFK Airport in New York City and Tel Aviv, Israel;
- Four nights lodging in luxury, 5-star hotels in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv;
- Meals, internal travel in Israel, and tourist/guided programming events.

The Representative also violated **3 V.S.A. § 1203b**, which reads: *"A public servant shall avoid any actions creating the appearance that the public servant is violating the Code of Ethics. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the Code of Ethics have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable individual with knowledge of the relevant facts."*

The alleged appearance of unethical conduct stems from the Representative's acceptance of gifts tied directly to lobbying activities of the gift-giver (the State of Israel) and the gift-giver's stated desire for legislative actions or outcomes over which the Representative has a measure of influence or control, including a relevant bill pending in the House of Representatives, H.310.

See supporting documentation in the Appendix, pages A-1 through A-12.

4. If you can, please indicate which law, rule or other legal requirement you believe has been violated.  
See response to #3 above.
5. Provide the names and contact information for anyone else who may have information regarding this complaint. Not applicable.
6. Has the conduct you describe above been the subject of a prior complaint? If yes, please explain.

We are not aware of any prior complaint against the Representative for this conduct.

7. Is there anything else the Ethics Commission should know about this complaint?  
See attached pages.

**Attach additional pages as necessary.**

**I certify that the information provided in this complaint is true, correct, complete, and of my own personal knowledge. I will fully cooperate in the process regarding this complaint.**



Date: 31 December 2025

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**Submit to: [ethicscommission@vermont.gov](mailto:ethicscommission@vermont.gov). Enter "Complaint" in the subject line**  
**If you wish to submit your complaint by regular mail, please email or call us first at (802) 828-7187**

## Specifics of ethics violation and supporting documentation

### *A note on supporting documentation*

Some documents in the Appendix, pages A-1 through A-12, were obtained through public records requests made to each of the five Vermont legislators who attended the event. Not all of the legislators responded to the requests with the same documents. Accordingly, certain documents included as attachments may have been supplied by a colleague of the Representative who attended the event, as indicated.

### *Applicability of Governmental Code of Ethics to the Representative*

According to [3 V.S.A. § 1202\(a\)](#), “Unless excluded under this section, the Code of Ethics applies to all public servants.” [3 V.S.A. § 1202](#) defines “public servant” to include members of the General Assembly.

Therefore, the Code of Ethics applies to the Representative.

### *The acceptance of gifts violated 3 V.S.A. § 1203g*

The Representative accepted an invitation from the Israeli Foreign Ministry to attend an event called “50 States, One Israel” that took place, including flights, from September 14 to 19, 2025. Associated with that event, the Representative accepted gifts of travel to, from, and within Israel, including a chartered flight, lodging in 5-star hotels, meals, and tourist/”guided programming” events, all paid for by the Israeli government.

These gifts are not acceptable for a public servant as specified in 3 V.S.A. § 1203g(a). The value of these gifts is \$6500,<sup>1</sup> according to the Israeli Foreign Ministry.<sup>2</sup>

### *The gifts are not allowed under 3 V.S.A. § 1203g(a)*

The gifts that were received are not allowed under the Vermont Code of Ethics. [3 V.S.A. §1203g\(a\)](#) states:

*A public servant shall not solicit or accept a gift unless permitted under this section. For purposes of this subchapter, “gift” means anything of value, tangible or intangible, that is given for less than adequate consideration.*

The rest of § 1203g(a) enumerates 14 gifts that are permitted, henceforth called “exceptions” to the prohibition of accepting gifts by public servants. Consultation with the Vermont Ethics Commission suggests that the only exception potentially relevant to this complaint would be exception (7), because it is the only gift permitted in §1203g(a) that includes cost of transportation. Exception (7) states:

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<sup>1</sup> This cost may not include the gift of air travel within the U.S. between Burlington, Vermont and New York City, or baggage fees that may have been incurred.

<sup>2</sup> See pages A-1 through A-5, email with subject, “[External] Update – 50 States One Israel: Itinerary, travel guidance ethics information”

(7) *Admission fees and tickets.* A public servant may accept free attendance to a widely attended charitable, cultural, political, or civic event at which a public servant participates in the public servant's official capacity, provided such tickets or admission is provided by the primary sponsoring entity. Free attendance may include all or part of the cost of admission; transportation to and from the event; and food, refreshments, entertainment, and instructional materials provided to all event attendees.

In addition, however, this complaint briefly addresses a second potentially relevant exception, subsection (10):

(10) *Training or education.* A public servant may accept attendance to training or similar events determined to be in the interest of the public servant's agency or department.

#### ***Exception (7) does not allow the gift of lodging***

While exception (7) lists gifts that may be included, that list does not include lodging.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, even if all other aspects of exception (7) were satisfied—and we show below that they were not—for a representative to accept a gift of lodging is impermissible and a violation of the Vermont Code of Ethics. The Representative accepted the gift of 4 nights of lodging. Therefore, the Representative violated the Vermont Code of Ethics.

#### ***The list in Exception (7) and the absence of such a list in the other exceptions is meaningful***

Unlike exception (7), which lists as acceptable “transportation to and from the event; and food, refreshments, entertainment, and instructional materials provided to all event attendees,” none of the other 13 exceptions includes a list of additional items that may be accepted as a gift. So, even if it is argued that the “50 States, One Israel” event was for the purpose of education under exception (10), it would still have been impermissible for a representative to accept as a gift anything other than the fee for the education.

#### ***Additional reasons the gifts are not allowed under Exception (7)***

In view of the possibility that the House Ethics Panel might find acceptable the gift of lodging for this event, even though it is not allowed by statute, here are additional reasons that exception (7) does not apply:

1. The “50 States, One Israel” event was not “widely attended.” Only U.S. state lawmakers and Israel’s government officials and designated representatives were allowed to attend; the event was closed to the general public.
2. The event was not a “charitable, cultural, political, or civic event.” Its chief purpose was lobbying by Israeli government officials, who requested that legislation be enacted in each of the 50 American states to benefit Israel.

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<sup>3</sup> The legislature either intended that exception (7) be limited to events that involved no more than day trips or anticipated that legislators would cover their own overnight accommodations.

State legislators were lobbied by the prime minister, the President of Israel, the foreign minister, and the Speaker of the Knesset, plus meetings were arranged for them with private-sector business leaders and NGO representatives.<sup>4</sup> Israel expressed its gratitude for past legislative acts by U.S. state legislators and pressed for future political influence and legislative favors. For example:

- In his address welcoming the delegation of U.S. state legislators to Israel on September 15, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, “I thank you for coming here to stand up with Israel. Democrats and Republicans alike. We value and cherish your support.”<sup>5</sup>
- Foreign Affairs Minister Gideon Sa’ar provided the particulars of the legislation the Israeli government wanted the assembled legislators to enact in their states. Sa’ar equated boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns directed at Israel with a “new form” of antisemitism and “delegitimization,” and asked legislators for assistance as Israel fights “in a fierce battle of delegitimization.” He called on the legislators to “ensure your home states have laws” against delegitimization and against BDS. He further urged the legislators to promote engagement and investments in Israel. Here are excerpts from the text of Foreign Minister Sa’ar’s remarks<sup>6</sup> to the state:

*The best answer against BDS, until this day - has been anti-BDS legislation by your States. You did it. And thank you for that.*

*But now we are witnessing a new wave. A stronger wave. An increased use of this tool.*

*Israel can defend itself, by itself, on the battlefield. We demonstrated that time and again. But we need your assistance in the fierce battle of delegitimization.*

*The boycotters - must be boycotted.*

*Those who delegitimize - must themselves be delegitimized.*

*The tools may be new, but the name of this campaign is very ancient: It's antisemitism.*

*And its new form is the delegitimization of the State of Israel, the only Jewish state.*

*Antisemitism was out of fashion after the Holocaust. But it has come back now stronger than ever. And this new antisemitism has unfortunately found its way*

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<sup>4</sup> See pages A-7 and A-8, program overview titled “50 States, One Israel: Bipartisan Delegation of U.S. State Legislators to Israel.”

<sup>5</sup> “Netanyahu welcomes largest-ever delegation of US lawmakers to Israel”, Sept. 16, 2025, <https://www.jns.org/netanyahu-welcomes-largest-ever-delegation-of-us-lawmakers-to-israel/>.

<sup>6</sup> Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/fm-sa-ar-addresses-delegation-of-250-us-state-legislators-15-sep-2025>.

*also into the United States. Which is something we didn't see in the past.*

*The new antisemites who think they can cleverly hunt Jews through economic means - must be deterred. **There are still some States without BDS laws.** We call on you: **ensure your home states have laws to protect Israel** and Jews against this modern antisemitism. [Emphasis added.]*

*To those who already have anti-BDS laws, that's majority [sic] - we thank you.*

*But each and every one of you have the ability to set a personal and powerful example: To fight BDS - by turning it on its head.*

*Instead of boycotting Israel - promote engagement with Israel.*

*Instead of divesting from Israel - promote investments in Israel.*

*And instead of sanctioning the only Jewish state - speak out clearly against those who use this age-old hatred in a modern way.*

Thus, the Israeli government gave the Representative the gifts not for participating in a “charitable, cultural, political, or civic” event, as allowed by exception (7), but for the purpose of lobbying the Representative to get legislation favorable to the Israeli government adopted in Vermont.

Bear in mind, too, that the “50 States, One Israel” event came at a time when Israel finds itself credibly accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, by Vermont’s Congressional delegation, and by prominent human rights organizations worldwide, including two in Israel (B’Tselem<sup>7</sup> and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel<sup>8</sup>).

The event also took shape as boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) efforts are intensifying in response to Israel’s horrific actions in Gaza and its ongoing military operations and illegal settlement activities in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, and after the country’s prime minister had been indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court.

With international condemnation and opprobrium of Israel growing at an unprecedented level, and its economy and reputation threatened by the BDS movement, the Netanyahu government urgently sought to strengthen and expand its legislative influence and protection in the United States. The “50 States, One Israel” event was for this purpose.

3. The event did not meet the criterion of exception (7) to be an event in which “a public servant participates in the public servant’s official capacity” in any sense of that phrase. The Representative did not receive an invitation to address the event or fulfill any other official roles,

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<sup>7</sup> “Our Genocide”, B’Tselem, [https://www.btselem.org/publications/202507\\_our\\_genocide](https://www.btselem.org/publications/202507_our_genocide)

<sup>8</sup> “Genocide in Gaza”, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, <https://www.phr.org.il/en/genocide-in-gaza-eng/>

and the Representative's involvement was not based on responsibilities related to the Vermont legislature.

4. It is noteworthy, too, that no benefits of the event have accrued to the State of Vermont or to the people of Vermont, including the hundreds of Vermont members of the Jewish Voice for Peace VT-NH chapter. The only beneficiaries were the Representatives in attendance and the government of Israel.
5. Exception (7) does not allow gifts to be extravagant, such as a charter flight. Pre-event communication from the Israeli consulate in Boston to fellow event attendee Rep. Gina Galfetti included this statement: "As part of the preparations for your upcoming trip, we are pleased to inform you that *we will be chartering a dedicated flight for all participating legislators.*"<sup>9</sup> (Emphasis added.) Even if transportation to and from the event is an allowable gift, the extravagance of a dedicated chartered flight is not.
6. Even if exception (7) allowed lodging, which it does not, the itinerary received by the legislators in advance of the trip advised them that they would be spending the first two nights of their visit at a luxury, 5-star hotel in Jerusalem and the final two nights at a luxury, 5-star hotel in Tel Aviv.<sup>10</sup> Nothing in Vermont law allows such an extravagant lodging gift.
7. Nor does exception (7) allow gifts unrelated to the event itself, such as site-seeing and tourist activities.<sup>11</sup>

#### ***The gifts are not allowed under Exception (10)***

Although the Israeli Consulate described the "50 States, One Israel" event as a "five-day study tour," it cannot legitimately be characterized as training or education.

The event was not "in the interest of the [Vermont] public servant's agency or department," i.e., the legislature. The event, as previously mentioned, was only in the interest of the attendees (the individual legislators) and the gift-giver (the government of Israel) and, therefore, does not meet the requirement of Exception (10) in § 1203g(a).

In any case, unlike exception (7), no expenses for travel, meals, etc., are included in exception (10).

#### ***Violation of 3 V.S.A. § 1203b, Appearance of Unethical Conduct***

The alleged appearance of unethical conduct stems from the Representative's acceptance of gifts tied directly to lobbying activities of the gift-giver (the State of Israel) and the gift-giver's stated desire for

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<sup>9</sup> See pages A-9 and A-10, email with subject, "Re: [External] 50 States One Israel Preliminary light details" [sic].

<sup>10</sup> According to the itinerary included in pages A-1 through A-5, the Representative was to spend the nights of September 14 and 15 at either the King David Hotel or the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem. The Representative was to spend the nights of the 16th and 17th at either the Dan Tel Aviv Hotel or the Jaffa Hotel. All four are rated as 5-star hotels. The market price of a room at the King David in mid-September is \$765/night. The market price of a room at the Inbal is \$448/night. The market price of a room at the Dan Tel Aviv is from \$445 - \$490/night. The market price of a room at the Jaffa Hotel is \$453/night. <https://www.booking.com>

<sup>11</sup> A Jerusalem Old City Tour has a market price of \$75. <https://www.nativeisrael.com/things-to-do/jerusalem-old-city-tour>.

legislative actions or outcomes over which this Representative has or could have a measure of influence or control, including future anti-BDS initiatives and proposed investments in Israel, and passage of a bill now pending in the Vermont House of Representatives, H.310.

In Vermont articles published in the wake of the “50 States, One Israel” event, certain reporters noted that Israel expected legislative payback from the Representative – and from the Representative’s Vermont colleagues at the event. Take the editorial board of the Valley News. The “reasonable Vermonters” at this newspaper, after reviewing the relevant facts, explicitly raised the matter of a “desired quid pro quo” by Israel. The paper wrote in an October editorial titled “Legislators’ fact-finding mission to Israel raises ethical concerns”:

*It also appears that the Israeli government was not shy about identifying the desired quid pro quo for its largesse, which included airfare, lodging, meals, and transportation within the country. It has been reported that Israeli officials asked the lawmakers directly to spread “the Israeli narrative.” That narrative consists at least in part of equating any criticism of the Israeli government’s policies and actions with antisemitism.<sup>12</sup>*

#### ***H.310 and the Appearance of Unethical Conduct***

The Representative co-sponsored H.310 in January 2025, during the first year of the current biennium. The bill remains under consideration and could be taken up during the 2026 legislative session. The general intent of H.310 is to “establish a curriculum around the evolving nature of antisemitism and how it should be taught to educators, administrators, and students” in the Vermont education system. H.310, however, expands the definition of “antisemitic harassment” to include “negative references to … the right to self-determination in the Jewish people’s ancestral and indigenous homeland.”<sup>13</sup>

If passed in its current form, H.310 could be deployed to ban or circumscribe teaching and learning in our schools that offer critical and alternative perspectives on Israel’s actions as an occupying power in Gaza and the West Bank, and on the relationship of these actions to Jewish-only self-determination in Israel and the occupied territories.

For this reason, H.310, if enacted, would help advance the legislative goals lobbied for at the “50 States, One Israel” event, and it creates the appearance of a violation of Vermont’s Code of Ethics.

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<sup>12</sup> See pages A-11 and A-12 or <https://vnews.com/2025/10/03/vermont-new-hampshire-lawmakers-israel-trip/>.

<sup>13</sup> The “right to self-determination” in H.310 is consistent with language in Israel’s 2018 “Basic Law,” the equivalent in that country of a constitutional amendment. It stipulates that the right to national self-determination within Israel is *unique to the Jewish people*, even though 50% of the population living under Israeli rule are non-Jewish.

## APPENDIX - Supporting documentation

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Political Israeli  
**Subject:** [External] Update- 50 States One Israel: Itinerary, travel guidance, ethics information  
**Date:** Friday, September 5, 2025 1:48:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [image004.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[50 States One Israel Delegation- Itinerary.docx.pdf](#)

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**[External]**

I hope this email finds you well.

It was a pleasure to see you at Wednesday's Zoom call with Consul General Sharoni and Deputy Consul General Liron Finkelstein. Liron will be travelling with you through Israel.

By now you should have received connecting flight tickets if you are using them as well as your tickets to Israel.

**PLEASE ensure that your personal details are listed correctly, exactly as they appear in your passport.**

As you prepare for the upcoming delegation trip to Israel in mid-September, I wanted to share a few important details, including the itinerary (attached), *which is still subject to change*.

## General Travel Guidance

Israel is a culturally rich and informal country. This guide outlines attire suggestions, event details, and practical tips to ensure a respectful and comfortable visit.

### Dress Code & Attire

#### Tours (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the South, etc.):

- Comfortable clothing suitable for walking is recommended in Tel Aviv and during most daytime tours.
- In Jerusalem and Yad Vashem, please avoid sleeveless tops, shorts, and short skirts out of respect for local customs.

#### Formal Events:

- **Monday & Wednesday Evenings** -including meetings at the Knesset, with the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the President:

## APPENDIX - Supporting documentation

- Formal attire is required: jacket and tie.

- **Thursday Event:**

- Semi-formal attire is appropriate: a jacket is recommended, but no tie is necessary.

**Footwear:**

- Comfortable walking shoes are strongly recommended for all tours.

## Weather in Israel – Mid-September

Expect warm, dry conditions throughout the country. Below is a general overview:

Location	Daytime High	Nighttime Low	Rainfall Conditions
Tel Aviv	27–31°C (81–88°F)	19–22°C (66–72°F)	Minimal Mostly sunny
Jerusalem	28–34°C (82–93°F)	19–21°C (66–70°F)	Minimal Warm and dry

Humidity ranges from 30–60%, and sunshine averages 11 hours per day. Sunscreen and plenty of water are recommended.

## Currency:

The local currency is the Israeli New Shekel (ILS); credit cards are widely accepted

- ATMs are available, notify your bank of international travel to avoid card blocks.

## Electrical Adapters:

Israel uses plug types **C, H, and M**, with a standard voltage of **230V** and frequency of **50 Hz**.

- Travelers from North America will need a **plug adapter**, and possibly a **voltage converter** if their devices are not dual-voltage.

## Mobile Phones:

- Please check with your mobile provider regarding international plans
- Free WiFi is widely available, and apps like WhatsApp, Signal, and FaceTime work well over WiFi for calls and messaging.

## Ethics Disclosure

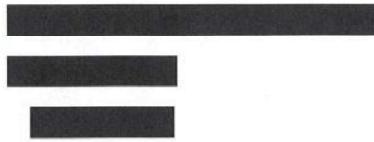
- **Trip Cost:** Approximately \$6,500 per person covering flights, lodging, meals, and local transportation..
- **Organizing Party:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sderot Yitshak Rabin 9 Jerusalem, 9195022 Israel



## APPENDIX - Supporting documentation

Director of Political Affairs

Consulate General of Israel to New England



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### States One Israel Delegation- Itinerary 50

#### Sunday, September 14th

19:50- Landing at Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport (TLV)- (El Al 14 from Boston).

VIP Airport clearance

21:30- Arrive at hotel (King David and Inbal). Dinner.

#### Monday, September 15th

08:00-11:00- Tour of the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Western Wall.

11:30-13:30- Yad Vashem - the World Holocaust Remembrance Center- including a Guided tour in English of the Holocaust History Museum by a Senior Yad Vashem guide and a Memorial Ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance.

13:45-15:00- Lunch at hotels.

15:30-16:45- Briefing by the Foreign Minister Gideon Saar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

17:00-19:30 visit at the Knesset and official welcome ceremony with the Speaker of the Knesset, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

20:00-22:00- "A Jerusalem Night"- festive opening Reception.

#### Tuesday, September 16th

09:30-11:30- Tour of the Communities Impacted on October 7th in the south

12:00-12:30: visit the Nova Site.

13:30-14:30 Memorial Ceremony and Tree Planting- Ofakim.

14:30-16:00- lunch with local youth.

05:30pm- Arrive at Hotel, Tel Aviv (Dan Tel Aviv or The Jaffa).

18:30-19:30- Dinner at the hotel.



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**Wednesday, September 17th****8:30-17:00- Israeli innovation Day:****Including:**

- a Tour at the Peres Peace Center or Start up nation Central
- meetings at leading Israeli companies and NGO's
- lunch at a local restaurant

**19:30-21:30- Presidential Dinner hosted by the President of the state of Israel (including  
Celebrating 5 years to the Abraham Accords)****Thursday, September 18th****09:00-11:00- Strategic Briefing by the Foreign Minister Gideon Saar****13:30-15:30 Closing Reception with the U.S Ambassador to Israel****16:00-20:00 Free time****20:00- Check in to flight at the hotel****00:05- Departure on flight LY003 to JFK .**

## APPENDIX - Supporting documentation

**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2025 1:44:45 PM  
**To:** Gina M. Galfetti <[GGalfetti@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:GGalfetti@leg.state.vt.us)>  
**Subject:** [External] RSVP: Personal Invitation from Consul General Benny Sharoni

[External]

Dear Representative Galfetti,

I am happy to personally invite you to visit Israel with "50 States, One Israel" in coordination with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This is a landmark bipartisan delegation of senior state legislators from across the United States. The historic five-day study tour will bring together over 200 legislators from all 50 states for an in-depth exploration of Israel's leadership, society, heritage, and spirit of innovation. Participants will gain firsthand insight into the complexities and opportunities facing Israel today through high-level meetings with Israeli decision-makers, site visits to key national and cultural landmarks in Jerusalem and beyond, and direct engagement with experts in political, social, and academic fields.

The trip will take place in Israel, from September 13-18, 2025.

It would be an honor if you could join the group.

Please see the attached formal invitation, and for any additional questions, please reach out to [REDACTED] at [political@boston.mfa.gov.il](mailto:political@boston.mfa.gov.il)

Sincerely,

Benny

**Consul General Benjamin Sharoni**  
Consulate General of Israel to New England  
[REDACTED]



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הគונסול הכללי של ישראל בניו אינגלנד  
Consul General of Israel to New England



## 50 States, One Israel

### Bipartisan Delegation of U.S. State Legislators to Israel

(Leaving September 13<sup>th</sup>) September 14–19, 2025

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel and the Consulate General of Israel to New England we would like to thank you for choosing to be part of the **“50 States, One Israel”** - historic bipartisan delegation uniting state legislators from all across the United States for an unforgettable journey through Israel.

We have prepared a five day program designed to be meaningful and deeply impactful. You will meet with leadership of the State of Israel, visit sites of profound historical and spiritual significance, experience Israel’s innovative ecosystem and connect with Israelis from all walks of life.

Here is a glimpse of what lies ahead:

- **Welcome Ceremony at the Israeli Parliament- the Knesset**

At Israel’s parliament, you will be formally welcomed by the Speaker of the Knesset and engage with Israeli legislators from across the political spectrum. This exchange will offer a closer look at Israel’s democratic institutions and the shared challenges of representative governance.

- **Meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel**

This conversation will provide direct access to Israel’s head of government, who will share strategic insights into the region, current security priorities, and Israel’s evolving role in the global arena.

- **Gala Evening Hosted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs**

This special evening will feature Israeli music, cuisine, and cultural performances in celebration of the enduring friendship between our nations. It will also be an opportunity to connect with fellow delegates and Israeli counterparts.

- **Dinner with the President of Israel**

Hosted by the President, this meeting will provide a broader civic perspective on Israeli society, democracy, and national identity.

- **Tour of Jerusalem’s Old City**

Explore the heart of a city sacred to millions around the world. As you walk through Jerusalem’s Old City, you will encounter historic and spiritual sites central to Judaism,

phone [REDACTED]

fax [REDACTED]

email [REDACTED]

Christianity, and Islam, gaining insight into the unique realities of coexistence and shared heritage.

- **Visit to Yad Vashem – The Holocaust Remembrance Center**

This visit offers a profound reflection on the horrors of antisemitism, racism, and the consequences of silence. It serves as a powerful reminder of the moral responsibility shared by all public leaders to protect human dignity and stand up against hate.

- **Visit to the Southern region communities that were Attacked on October 7<sup>th</sup>**

Witness firsthand the human impact of ongoing regional conflict. This visit includes a tour of affected communities, meetings with survivors of the October 7th attacks and the Nova music festival massacre, and a memorial ceremony honoring those who were lost.

- **Meetings and Tours focused on Innovation, Communities and Business**

Engage with Israeli innovators, educators, civil society leaders, and entrepreneurs tackling real-world challenges in areas such as bio-tech, climate, technology, health, and inclusion. These conversations will highlight Israel's dynamism while offering space for candid dialogue.

- **Visit to the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation**

Named for one of Israel's visionary leaders, this center showcases how technology and cooperation can advance peace and prosperity. You'll explore how Israeli innovation is fostering cross-border partnerships and long-term solutions.

- **Closing event with the U.S. Ambassador to Israel**

Our journey will conclude with a conversation with the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, offering a space for reflection and discussion.

We are honored to walk this path with you and look forward to exploring our shared values enduring partnership and steadfast friendship.

With deep appreciation,

**Benjamin (Benny) Sharoni**

**Consul General of Israel to New England**



## APPENDIX - Supporting documentation

**From:** Gina M. Galfetti  
**To:** Political - Consulate General of ISRAEL in Boston  
**Subject:** Re: [External] 50 States One Israel Preliminary light details  
**Date:** Thursday, August 14, 2025 10:50:36 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[1000003124-id-b2a60d02-9adc-4d63-923d-fee049b27e27.png](#)

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[REDACTED], I would like to travel from BTV.

Thanks so much and looking forward to this experience.

Kind Regards  
Representative Gina Galfetti



Washington/Orange  
Co-Chair: Sportsmen's Caucus  
Co-Chair: Flood Caucus  
New Member Liaison  
Mobile: [REDACTED]

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**From:** Political - Consulate General of ISRAEL in Boston <Political@boston.mfa.gov.il>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 14, 2025 10:41:36 AM  
**Subject:** [External] 50 States One Israel Preliminary light details

**[External]**

We hope this message finds you well. As part of the preparations for your upcoming trip, we are pleased to inform you that we will be chartering a dedicated flight for all participating legislators.

**Departure to Israel:**

September 14, 2025 - (JFK → TLV) Flight LY014, 02:30 AM EST- 07:50 PM

**Return to the U.S.:**

September 19, 2025 - (TLV → JFK) Flight LY003, 00:05 AM- 04:55 AM EST

To ensure a smooth and convenient travel experience, we are also coordinating connecting flights from/to Boston Logan airport and JFK. If you would prefer to travel from Portland, ME or Burlington, VT, rather than Logan Airport, please let us know, and we will make the necessary arrangements.

## APPENDIX - Supporting documentation

Our goal is to make your travel as seamless and comfortable as possible. Additional details regarding departure times, check-in procedures, and itinerary will be shared soon.

We look forward to supporting your journey and thank you for your continued service.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]  
Director of Political Affairs  
Consulate General of Israel to New England  
[REDACTED]



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# VALLEY NEWS

## EDITORIALS

# Editorial: Legislators' fact-finding mission to Israel raises ethical concerns



by Valley News Editorial Board

October 3, 2025

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Ill-advised is the most charitable description we can think of for the participation of Vermont and New Hampshire lawmakers in last month's "50 States, One Israel" junket that was bought and paid for by the Israeli government. It can be justified as a fact-finding mission only if facts are defined as those found, selected and presented by the Netanyahu regime.

VtDigger reports that 250 legislators representing all 50 states went on the trip. According to the Israeli government, they "witnessed the magnitude of the October 7 tragedy, experienced Israel's innovation and cutting-edge technology, tasted our incredible cuisine, and met with Israel's leaders." They also listened to a musical performance dedicated to Charlie Kirk.

Certainly, being exposed to the savagery of Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, terrorist attacks through a visit to the site of the Nova Music Festival massacre must have been moving as well as educational, both in the factual and moral sense. It also provides important context for Israel's response.

But it is beyond our powers of imagination to understand how American lawmakers could enjoy that "incredible cuisine" in the certain knowledge that the Israeli government is inflicting a humanitarian catastrophe on Palestinians in Gaza, employing American-made and -supplied munitions to rain death and destruction on civilians and the infrastructure of civic life.

That is also a brand of savagery, one that the legislators were not allowed to witness. Nor can this blackout have been a surprise to those who took the trip since Israel has denied access to independent foreign journalists throughout its campaign in Gaza.

One of the Vermont legislators who participated, state Rep. Will Greer, D-Bennington, described the trip as an opportunity to share with Israeli leaders concerns raised by his constituents, including the lack of food being allowed into Gaza. However well-meaning, this strikes us as

incredibly naive, especially in comparison with the propaganda bonanza the trip yielded to the Israeli government.

It also appears that the Israeli government was not shy about identifying the desired quid pro quo for its largesse, which included airfare, lodging, meals and transportation within the country. It has been reported that Israeli officials asked the lawmakers directly to spread “the Israeli narrative.” That narrative consists at least in part of equating any criticism of the Israeli government’s policies and actions with antisemitism. This is a dangerous idea already being peddled by the Trump administration.

And The Jerusalem Post reported that the Americans were urged to pass state laws to block the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement that aims to exert economic pressure on Israel. This is not to suggest that lawmakers can be bought for so cheap a price as an all-expense paid trip, but it will necessarily cloud any support they offer for such measures in the future, even if they would have been inclined to back them without visiting Israel.

We can certainly understand the impulse for Israeli leaders to extend this invitation to American lawmakers at a time when that nation’s moral authority is at low ebb internationally as a result of its actions in Gaza. Whether those actions meet the definition of genocide, crimes against humanity or ethnic cleansing is not our call to make at present, but we do assert that they are morally abhorrent to many who have long regarded Israel not only as a state, but also as an idea and an ideal.

That disappointment and dismay is reflected in a new New York Times poll indicating that a majority of Americans now oppose providing more economic and military aid to Israel and that for the first time, more Americans sympathize with Palestinians than with Israelis, albeit by a small margin. Both results reflect a dramatic decline in support for Israel from the end of 2023.

While there’s no substitute for seeing for yourself, the legislators who went on the trip should have realized that seeing only half a picture is a distortion of reality in which they were wittingly or unwittingly complicit.