

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To encourage the normalization of relations with Israel, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. YOUNG) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To encourage the normalization of relations with Israel, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Israel Relations Nor-
5 malization Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Support for peace between Israel and its
9 neighbors has longstanding bipartisan support in
10 Congress.

1 (2) For decades, the United States Congress
2 has promoted Israel's acceptance among Arab and
3 other relevant countries and regions to enact numer-
4 ous laws opposing efforts to boycott, isolate, and
5 stigmatize America's ally, Israel.

6 (3) The recent peace and normalization agree-
7 ments between Israel and several Arab states—the
8 United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Mo-
9 rocco—have the potential to fundamentally trans-
10 form the security, diplomatic, and economic environ-
11 ment in the Middle East and North Africa and ad-
12 vance vital United States national security interests.

13 (4) These historic agreements could help ad-
14 vance peace between Israel, the Arab states, and rel-
15 evant countries and regions, further diplomatic
16 openings, and enhance efforts towards a negotiated
17 solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting
18 in two states—a democratic Jewish state of Israel
19 and a viable democratic Palestinian state—living
20 side by side in peace, security, and mutual recogni-
21 tion.

22 (5) These agreements build upon the decades-
23 long leadership of the United States Government in
24 helping Israel broker peace treaties with Egypt and

1 Jordan and promoting peace talks between Israel
2 and Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians.

3 (6) These agreements also build on decades-
4 long private diplomatic and security engagement be-
5 tween Israel and countries in the region.

6 (7) These normalization and peace agreements
7 could begin to transform the region by spurring eco-
8 nomic growth, enhancing technological innovation,
9 advancing understanding, and forging closer people-
10 to-people relations.

11 (8) These agreements could promote invest-
12 ment, tourism, and direct flights, and promote co-
13 operation on security, telecommunications, tech-
14 nology, energy, healthcare, culture, the environment,
15 water security, and sustainable development.

16 **SEC. 3. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-**
17 **FINED.**

18 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-
19 mittees” means—

20 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
21 the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

22 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
23 Committee on Armed Services of the House of Rep-
24 resentatives.

1 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

2 It is the policy of the United States—

3 (1) to expand and strengthen the Abraham Ac-
4 cords to encourage other nations to normalize rela-
5 tions with Israel and ensure that existing agree-
6 ments reap tangible security and economic benefits
7 for the citizens of those countries;

8 (2) to develop and implement a regional strat-
9 egy to encourage economic cooperation among Israel,
10 Arab states, and the Palestinians to enhance the
11 prospects for peace, respect for human rights, and
12 transparent governance, and for cooperation to ad-
13 dress water scarcity, climate solutions, health care,
14 sustainable development, and other areas that result
15 in benefits for residents of those countries;

16 (3) to develop and implement a regional secu-
17 rity strategy that recognizes the shared threat posed
18 by Iran and violent extremist organizations, ensures
19 sufficient United States deterrence in the region,
20 builds partner capacity to address shared threats,
21 and explores multilateral security arrangements built
22 around like-minded partners;

23 (4) to support and encourage government-to-
24 government and grassroots initiatives aimed at nor-
25 malizing ties with the state of Israel and promoting
26 people-to-people contact between Israelis, Arabs, and

1 other relevant countries and regions, including by
2 expanding and enhancing the Abraham Accords;

3 (5) to oppose efforts to delegitimize the state of
4 Israel and legal barriers to normalization with
5 Israel;

6 (6) to work to combat anti-Semitism and sup-
7 port normalization with Israel, including by coun-
8 tering anti-Semitic narratives on social media and
9 state media and pressing for curricula reform in
10 education; and

11 (7) to encourage partnerships and collaboration
12 on climate solutions, water, health, sustainable de-
13 velopment, and other areas.

14 **SEC. 5. UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN AND**
15 **EXPAND ABRAHAM ACCORDS AND OTHER RE-**
16 **LATED NORMALIZATION AGREEMENTS WITH**
17 **ISRAEL.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
19 date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter,
20 the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Adminis-
21 trator of the United States Agency for International De-
22 velopment, the Secretary of Defense, and the heads of
23 other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, shall
24 develop and submit to the appropriate congressional com-

1 mittees a strategy on expanding and strengthening the
2 Abraham Accords.

3 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
4 section (a) shall include the following elements:

5 (1) An assessment of future staffing and
6 resourcing requirements of entities within the De-
7 partment of State, the United States Agency for
8 International Development, the Department of De-
9 fense, and other appropriate Federal departments
10 and agencies with responsibility to coordinate United
11 States efforts to expand and strengthen the Abra-
12 ham Accords.

13 (2) An assessment of the bilateral and multilat-
14 eral cooperation between Israel, Arab states, and
15 other relevant countries and regions that have nor-
16 malized relations with Israel, including an assess-
17 ment of cooperation in the economic, social, cultural,
18 scientific, technical, educational, and health fields,
19 and an assessment of roadblocks to increased co-
20 operation.

21 (3) An assessment of bilateral and multilateral
22 security cooperation between Israel, the United
23 States, Arab states, and other relevant countries and
24 regions that have normalized relations with Israel,
25 including an assessment of potential roadblocks to

1 increased security cooperation, interoperability, and
2 information sharing.

3 (4) An assessment of the likelihood of addi-
4 tional Arab and other relevant countries and regions
5 to normalize relations with Israel.

6 (5) A detailed description of how the United
7 States Government will leverage diplomatic lines of
8 effort and resources from other stakeholders (includ-
9 ing from foreign governments, international donors,
10 and multilateral institutions) to encourage normal-
11 ization, economic development, and people-to-people
12 programming.

13 **SEC. 6. REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO PRO-**
14 **MOTE NORMALIZATION.**

15 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after the
16 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,
17 in coordination with the Administrator of the United
18 States Agency for International Development and the
19 heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies,
20 shall submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Rela-
21 tions of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs
22 of the House of Representatives regarding options for
23 United States international efforts to promote strength-
24 ening of ties between Israel, Arab states, and other rel-
25 evant countries and regions.

1 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under para-
2 graph (1) shall include the following elements:

3 (1) A description of options for leveraging con-
4 tributions of international donors, institutions, and
5 partner countries to facilitate people-to-people and
6 government-to-government relations between Israelis
7 and Arabs.

8 (2) Identification of existing investment funds
9 that support Israel-Arab state cooperation and rec-
10 ommendations for how such funds could be used to
11 support normalization and increase prosperity for all
12 relevant stakeholders.

13 (3) A proposal for how the United States Gov-
14 ernment and others can utilize the scholars and Ara-
15 bic language resources of the United States Holo-
16 caust Museum to counter Holocaust denial and anti-
17 Semitism.

18 (4) An assessment for creating an Abrahamic
19 Center for Pluralism to prepare educational mate-
20 rials, convene international seminars, promote toler-
21 ance and pluralism, and bring together scholars as
22 a means of advancing religious tolerance and coun-
23 tering political and religious extremism.

24 (5) An assessment of the value to Israel and its
25 neighbors of participating in a regional conference

1 on climate solutions, water, health, and sustainable
2 development.

3 (6) An assessment of the feasibility and value
4 of increasing the capacity of existing Department of
5 State and United States Agency for International
6 Development-funded programs for developing people-
7 to-people exchange programs for young people be-
8 tween Israel, Arab states, and other relevant coun-
9 tries and regions.

10 (7) Recommendations to improve Department
11 of State cooperation and coordination, particularly
12 between the Special Envoy to Monitor Anti-Semitism
13 and the Ambassador at Large for International Reli-
14 gious Freedom, and the Office of International Reli-
15 gious Freedom, to combat racism, xenophobia,
16 Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, which hinder im-
17 provement of relations between Israel, Arab states,
18 and other relevant countries and regions.

19 (8) An assessment of the value and feasibility
20 of Federal support for interparliamentary exchange
21 programs for Members of Congress, Knesset, and
22 parliamentarians from Arab and other relevant
23 countries and regions, including through existing
24 Federal programs that support such exchanges.

1 **SEC. 7. BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO NORMALIZATION**
2 **WITH ISRAEL.**

3 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
4 “Strengthening Reporting of Actions Taken Against the
5 Normalization of Relations with Israel Act of 2021”.

6 (b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress makes the following find-
7 ings:

8 (1) The Arab League, an organization com-
9 prising 22 Middle Eastern and African countries
10 and entities, has maintained an official boycott of
11 Israeli companies and Israeli-made goods since the
12 founding of Israel in 1948.

13 (2) Longstanding United States policy has en-
14 couraged Arab League states to normalize their rela-
15 tions with Israel and has long prioritized funding co-
16 operative programs that promote normalization be-
17 tween Arab League States and Israel, including the
18 Middle East Regional Cooperation program, which
19 promotes Arab-Israeli scientific cooperation.

20 (3) While some Arab League governments are
21 signaling enhanced cooperation with the state of
22 Israel on the government-to-government level, most
23 continue to persecute their own citizens who estab-
24 lish people-to-people relations with Israelis in non-
25 governmental fora, through a combination of judicial
26 and extrajudicial retribution.

1 (4) Some Arab League states maintain draco-
2 nian anti-normalization laws that punish their citi-
3 zens for people-to-people relations with Israelis, with
4 punishments including imprisonment, revocation of
5 citizenship, and execution. Extrajudicial punish-
6 ments by these and other Arab states include sum-
7 mary imprisonment, accusations of “treason” in gov-
8 ernment-controlled media, and professional black-
9 listing.

10 (5) Anti-normalization laws, together with the
11 other forms of retribution, effectively condemn these
12 societies to mutual estrangement and, by extension,
13 reduce the possibility of conciliation and com-
14 promise.

15 (6) Former Israeli President Shimon Peres said
16 in 2008 at the United Nations that Israel agrees
17 with the Arab Peace Initiative that a military solu-
18 tion to the conflict “will not achieve peace or provide
19 security for the parties”.

20 (7) Despite the risk of retaliatory action, a ris-
21 ing tide of Arab civic actors advocate direct engage-
22 ment with Israeli citizens and residents. These in-
23 clude the Arab Council for Regional Integration, a
24 group of 32 public figures from 15 Arab countries
25 who oppose the boycott of Israel on the grounds that

1 the boycott has denied Arabs the benefits of partner-
2 ship with Israelis, has blocked Arabs from helping to
3 bridge the Israeli-Palestinian divide, and inspired di-
4 visive intra-Arab boycotts among diverse sects and
5 ethnic groups.

6 (8) On February 11, 2020, a delegation of the
7 Arab Council to the French National Assembly in
8 Paris testified to the harmful effects of “anti-nor-
9 malization laws”, called on the Assembly to enact a
10 law instructing the relevant French authorities to
11 issue an annual report on instances of Arab govern-
12 ment retribution for any of their citizens or resi-
13 dents who call for peace with Israel or engage in di-
14 rect civil relations with Israeli citizens, and re-
15 quested democratic legislatures to help defend the
16 region’s civil peacemakers.

17 (9) On May 11, 2020, 85 leaders in France
18 published an endorsement of the Arab Council’s pro-
19 posal, calling on France and other democratic gov-
20 ernments to “protect Arabs who engage in dialogue
21 with Israeli citizens” and proposing “the creation of
22 a study group in the National Assembly as well as
23 in the Senate whose mission would be to ensure a
24 legal and technical monitoring of the obstacles which
25 Arab proponents of dialogue with Israelis face”.

1 (10) Arab-Israeli cooperation provides signifi-
2 cant symbiotic benefit to the security and economic
3 prosperity of the region.

4 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
7 thereafter for 5 years, the Secretary of State shall
8 submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations of
9 the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
10 the House of Representatives a report on the status
11 of the normalization of relations with Israel.

12 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required under
13 paragraph (1) shall include the following informa-
14 tion:

15 (A) The status of “anti-normalization
16 laws” in each country within the jurisdiction of
17 the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, including
18 efforts within each country to sharpen existing
19 laws, enact new or additional “anti-normaliza-
20 tion legislation”, or repeal such laws.

21 (B) Instances of prosecution of citizens or
22 residents of Arab countries for calling for peace
23 with Israel, visiting the state of Israel, or en-
24 gaging Israeli citizens in any way.

1 (C) Instances of extrajudicial retribution
2 by Arab governments or government-controlled
3 institutions against citizens or residents of Arab
4 countries for any of the same actions referred
5 to in subparagraph (B).

6 (D) Evidence of steps taken by Arab gov-
7 ernments toward permitting or encouraging
8 people-to-people relations between their citizens
9 or residents and Israeli citizens.

10 (E) Instances where Arab governments
11 used state-owned or state-operated media out-
12 lets to promote anti-Semitic propaganda.

13 **SEC. 8. SUNSET.**

14 This Act shall cease to be effective on the date that
15 is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.