Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

We greatly appreciate your efforts on behalf of advancing U.S.-Israel defense cooperation—a critical investment that provides safety and stability in the Middle East. Israel will require significant investment in Fiscal Year 2017 to defend itself against both aerial and subterranean threats posed by a wide array of hostile adversaries.

Currently, the governments of the U.S. and Israel are in the late stages of discussions about a number of projects and budget issues related to our cooperative programs. The programs have achieved key milestones and conducted successful interception tests; as a result, they may require altering the breakout in program funding between the Procurement and the Research and Development (R&D) accounts, as well as the final determination of systems requirements and funding.

We expect to make similar requests for U.S.-Israel cooperative defense funding to those we have made in previous years. However, due to the ongoing deliberations, we are unable to provide a detailed budgetary request.

Instead, we respectfully request that you robustly fund for Fiscal Year 2017 the following cooperative programs:

- R&D funding for the Arrow System Improvement Program (ASIP) to counter long-range ballistic missiles;
- Procurement and R&D funding for the Arrow-3 system, designed to shoot down ballistic missiles outside the earth's atmosphere;
- Procurement and R&D funding for the David's Sling Weapon System (DSWS), designed to intercept short to medium-range ballistic missiles, guided projectiles, cruise missiles, aircraft and drones;
- Procurement funding for the Iron Dome defense system to counter short-range rocket threats; and
- R&D funding to continue developing a new, joint U.S.-Israel anti-tunneling defense program, which could be used to protect Israel and U.S. forces from terrorist attacks.

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As you know, these programs are essential to the safety and security of our ally Israel. Prioritizing and ensuring robust funding for these programs is necessary to address the evolving threats posed by Israeli adversaries, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran—all of which are developing more advanced, short, medium, and long-range rocket and missile capabilities.

It has been documented that Hamas is building and expanding subterranean attack tunnels largely impervious to current technologies. We must assist in helping Israel develop the technology to combat these tunnels which Hamas uses to kidnap Israelis and ambush Israeli towns.

These cooperative programs also yield a tremendous return-on-investment for the U.S. in the form of economic, technological, and military benefits. The U.S. is now co-producing Iron Dome, David's Sling, and the Arrow programs with Israel, yielding American jobs and granting the U.S. shares in the program's production technology.

These proven cooperative defense programs are a win-win for the U.S. as they save lives, prevent conflict escalation, and advance U.S. objectives by promoting regional stability and protecting a valuable ally.

During these challenging budgetary times, we can and must prioritize federal funding for the programs where federal involvement can are the greatest impact on people's lives. These cooperative programs are without question worthwhile priorities in need of support.

Sincerely,

PETER J. ROSKAM
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress