

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS


EMPLOYEE POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM Original Amendment

This form is for disclosing the receipt of travel expenses from private sources for travel taken in connection with official duties. This form does not eliminate the need to report privately-funded travel on the annual *Financial Disclosure Statements* of those employees required to file them. In accordance with House Rule 25, clause 5, **you must complete this form and file it with the Clerk of the House by email at gifttravelreports@mail.house.gov, within 15 days after travel is completed.** Please **do not** file this form with the Committee on Ethics.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Name of Traveler: Olivia Speno
2. a. Name of Accompanying Relative: _____ **OR** None
b. Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
3. a. Dates: Departure: 2/14/2026 Return: 2/22/2026
b. Dates at Personal Expense, if any: _____ **OR** None
4. Departure City: Washington, DC Destination: Tel Aviv Return City: Washington, DC
5. Sponsor(s), Who Paid for the Trip: American Israel Education Foundation Inc. (AIEF)
6. Describe Meetings and Events Attended: Attended security briefings on Israel and Middle East relations, toured cultural sites, and met with members of the Israeli government as well as U.S. officials in Israel. The group also spent time with locals learning about life after the war.
7. Attached to this form are **each** of the following, *signify that each item is attached by checking the corresponding box*:
 - a. a completed *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form*;
 - b. the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* completed by the trip sponsor **prior** to the trip, **including all** attachments **and** the *Additional Sponsor Form(s)*;
 - c. page 2 of the completed *Traveler Form* submitted by the employee; **and**
 - d. the letter from the Committee on Ethics approving my participation on this trip.
8. a. I represent that I participated in each of the activities reflected in the attached sponsor's agenda. *Signify statement is true by checking the box.*
b. If not, explain: _____

I certify that the information contained on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Traveler:  Date: 3/11/2026

I authorized this travel in advance. I have determined that all of the expenses listed on the attached *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form* were necessary and that the travel was in connection with the employee's official duties and would not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Name of Supervising Member: David G. Valadao Date: 3/11/2026

Signature of Supervising Member: 

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

SPONSOR POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

Original Amendment

This form must be completed by an officer of any organization that served as the primary trip sponsor in providing travel expenses or reimbursement for travel expenses to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. **A completed copy of the form must be provided to each House Member, officer, or employee who participated in the trip within 10 days of their return.** You must answer all questions, and check all boxes, on this form for your submission to comply with House Rules and the Committee’s Travel Regulations. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the denial of future requests to sponsor trips and/or subject the current traveler to disciplinary action or a requirement to repay the trip expenses.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Sponsor(s) who paid or provided in-kind support for the trip: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)

2. Travel Destination(s): Israel

3. Date of Departure: February 14, 2026 Date of Return: February 22, 2026

4. Name(s) of Traveler(s): Olivia Speno


Note: You may list more than one traveler on a form only if **all** information is **identical** for each person listed.

5. **Actual amount** of expenses paid on behalf of, or reimbursed to, each individual named in Question 4:

	Total Transportation Expenses	Total Lodging Expenses	Total Meal Expenses	Total Other Expenses (dollar amount per item and description)
Traveler	\$7,124.05	\$2,396.89	\$1,462.93	\$5,751.19
Accompanying Family Member	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6. All expenses connected to the trip were for actual costs incurred and not a *per diem* or lump sum payment. *Signify statement is true by checking box.*

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:  Date: 3/6/2026 | 09:45 EST

Name: Rachel Hirsch Title: Chief Legal Counsel

Organization: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)

I am an officer of the above-named organization. Signify statement is true by checking box.

Address: 251 H Street, NW Washington, D.C., 20001

Telephone: (202) 246-0519 Email: rhirsch@aiefdn.org

Committee staff may contact the above-named individual if additional information is required.

If you have questions regarding your completion of this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103.

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

TRAVELER FORM

1. Name of Traveler: Olivia Speno
2. Sponsor(s) who will be paying or providing in-kind support for the trip: American Israel Education Foundation Inc. (AIEF)
3. City and State **OR** Foreign Country of Travel: Israel
4. a. Date of Departure: February 14, 2026 Date of Return: February 22, 2026
b. Yes No Will you be extending the trip at your personal expense?
If yes, list dates at personal expense: _____
5. a. Yes No Will you be accompanied by a family member at the sponsor's expense? **If yes:**
(1) Name of Accompanying Family Member: _____
(2) Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
(3) Yes No Accompanying Family Member is at least 18 years of age?
6. a. Yes No Did the trip sponsor answer "Yes" to Question 8(c) on the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* (i.e., travel is sponsored by an entity that employs a registered federal lobbyist or a foreign agent)?
b. **If yes**, and you are requesting lodging for two nights, explain why the second night is warranted:

7. Yes No *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* is attached, including agenda, invitation, invitee list, and any other attachments and Additional Sponsor Forms.
NOTE: The agenda should show the traveler's individual schedule, including departure and arrival times and identify the specific events in which the traveler will be participating.
8. Explain why participation in the trip is connected to the traveler's individual official or representational duties. **Staff should include their job title and how the activities on the itinerary relate to their duties.**
As the Legislative Assistant for Rep. David Valadao, I cover the foreign affairs portfolio which includes Israel.
I am responsible for updating the representative about developments in the region, specifically as it relates to his work on the House Appropriations Committee.
It is important for me to learn more about the strategic partnership between Israel and the U.S. including more about the country's history.
9. **Yes No Is the traveler aware of any registered federal lobbyists or foreign agents involved in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip?**
10. For staff travelers, to be completed by your employing Member:

ADVANCED AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

I hereby authorize the individual named above, an employee of the U.S. House of Representatives who works under my direct supervision, to accept expenses for the trip described in this request. I have determined that the above-described travel is in connection with my employee's official duties and that acceptance of these expenses will not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Signature of Employing Member: _____



Date: 1/21/2026

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

PRIMARY TRIP SPONSOR FORM

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer, or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee together with a *Traveler Form* **at least 30 days before the start date of the trip**. The trip sponsor should *NOT* submit the form directly to the Committee. The Committee’s website (ethics.house.gov) provides detailed instructions for filling out the form. The Committee will notify the House invitees directly of its decision and will not notify the trip sponsors.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Failure to comply with the Committee’s Travel Regulations may also lead to the denial of permission to sponsor future trips. Signatures must comply with section 104(bb) of the Travel Regulations.

1. Sponsor who will be paying for the trip:
American Israel Education Foundation, Inc.
2. I represent that the trip will not be financed, in whole or in part, by a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent. *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*
3. **Check only one.** I represent that:
 - a. The primary trip sponsor has not accepted from any other source, funds intended directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip; **OR**
 - b. The trip is arranged without regard to congressional participation and the primary trip sponsor has accepted funds only from entities that will receive a tangible benefit in exchange for those funds; **OR**
 - c. The primary trip sponsor has accepted funds, services, or in-kind assistance from other source(s) intended directly or indirectly to finance all or part of this trip and has enclosed disclosure forms from each of those entities.
 If “c” is checked, list the names of the additional sponsors: _____

4. Provide names and titles of **ALL** House Members *and* employees you are inviting. **For each House invitee, provide an explanation of why the individual was invited** (include additional pages if necessary): _____
Please see attached.
5. Yes No Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)?
6. Date of Departure: February 14, 2026 Date of Return: February 22, 2026
7. a. City of departure: Washington, D.C. or home district
 b. Destination(s): Israel
 c. City of return: Washington, D.C. or home district
8. **Check only one.** I represent that
 - a. The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965; **OR**
 - b. The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent; **OR**
 - c. The sponsor employs or retains a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent, but the trip is for attendance at a one-day event *and* lobbyist / foreign agent involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was *de minimis* under the Committee’s travel regulations.

9. **Check only one of the following.**

- a. I checked 8(a) or (b) above; **OR**
- b. I checked 8(c) above but am not offering any lodging; **OR**
- c. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for one night; **OR**
- d. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for two nights. If you checked this box, explain why the second night of lodging is warranted. _____

10. Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities House invitees will be participating in during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities for trip invitees). *Indicate agenda is attached by checking box.*

11. **Check only one of the following.**

- a. I represent that a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip. *Signify the statement is true by clicking the box;* **OR**
- b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is a U.S. institution of higher education.

12. For *each* sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip **and** its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:

AIEF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a charitable and educational mission which includes, among other things, educating policy makers and opinion leaders about the U.S.-Israel relationship. AIEF is solely responsible for recruiting, coordinating, executing, and funding all aspects of this trip.

13. **Answer parts a and b. Answer part c if necessary:**

- a. Mode of travel: Air Rail Bus Car Other (specify: _____)
- b. Class of travel: Coach Business First Charter Other (specify: charter bus in Israel)
- c. If travel will be first class, or by chartered or private aircraft, explain why such travel is warranted:
n/a

14. I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*

15. **Check only one.** I represent that either:

- a. The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees; **OR**
- b. The trip involves events that are arranged specifically *with regard* to congressional participation. If "b" is checked:
 - 1) Detail the cost *per day* of meals (approximate cost may be provided): \$187.60

2) Provide the reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: _____
 The trip is in Israel to educate congressional staff about the U.S.-Israel relationship.

16. Name, nightly cost, and reasons for selecting each hotel or other lodging facility:

Hotel Name:	<u>Mamilla Hotel</u>	City:	<u>Jerusalem</u>	Cost Per Night:	<u>\$375</u>
Reason(s) for Selecting:	<u>location and affordability</u>				
Hotel Name:	<u>The Dan Hotel</u>	City:	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	Cost Per Night:	<u>\$404</u>
Reason(s) for Selecting:	<u>location and affordability</u>				
Hotel Name:	<u>Gomeh Hotel</u>	City:	<u>Tiberias</u>	Cost Per Night:	<u>\$343</u>
Reason(s) for Selecting:	<u>location and affordability</u>				

17. I represent that all expenses connected to the trip will be for actual costs incurred and not a per diem or lump sum payment. *Signify that the statement is true by checking the box.*

18. **Total Expenses for each Participant:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimates	Total Transportation Expenses per Participant	Total Lodging Expenses per Participant	Total Meal Expenses per Participant
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$6,711.33	\$2,461	\$1,313
For each Accompanying Family Member	N/A	N/A	N/A

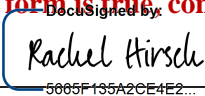
	Other Expenses (dollar amount per item)	Identify Specific Nature of "Other" Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$4,166.67	Please find attached.
For each Accompanying Family Member	n/a	n/a

19. **Check only one:**

- a. I certify that I am an officer of the organization listed below; **OR**
- b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is an individual or a U.S. institution of higher education.

20. **I certify by my signature that**

- a. **I read and understand the Committee's Travel Regulations;**
- b. **I am not a registered federal lobbyist or registered foreign agent; and**
- c. **The information on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signature:  Date: 1/9/2026 | 15:21 EST
DocuSigned by: 5065F135A2CE4E2...
 Name: Rachel Hirsch Title: Chief Legal Counsel
 Organization: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)
 Address: 251 H Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20001
 Email: rhirsch@aiefdn.org Telephone: (202) 246-0519

If there are questions regarding this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103 or travel.requests@mail.house.gov.

American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)
Educational Seminar in Israel
U.S. Congressional Staff
February 14-22, 2026

Addendum

4. List of Invitees

As staff to a U.S. Representative, these invitees are consistently engaged in issue areas relevant to the U.S. – Israel relationship. These issues include U.S. foreign policy, U.S. appropriations, refugee and immigrant issues, homeland security, cybersecurity, and veteran’s affairs. These issues—along with issues more broadly related to the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Israel—will be explored during the AIEF Israel Seminar, which is focused on educating congressional staff on events throughout the region by providing on-the-ground context.

1. Shaefer Bagwell, Legislative Director, Office of the Honorable George Whitesides (D-CA)
2. Ariana Bhambhani, Senior Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Rick Allen (R-GA)
3. Taylor Fairless, National Security Advisor, Office of the Honorable Jimmy Panetta (D-CA)
4. Matt Fisher, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Suhas Subramanyam (D-VA)
5. James Gomez, Foreign Policy Advisor, Office of the Honorable Jonathan Jackson (D-IL)
6. Sarah Izaak, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Valerie Foushee (D-NC)
7. Dan Lemire, Military Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Joseph Morelle (D-NY)
8. Darby McQueen-Dever, Legislative Director, Office of the Honorable Michael Cloud (R-TX)
9. Laney O’Shea, Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Director, Office of the Honorable Herb Conaway (D-NJ)
10. Chris Ringer, Legislative Director, Office of the Honorable Sheri Biggs (R-SC)
11. Rachel Salle, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Brian Jack (R-GA)
12. Michelle Schein, Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Director, Office of the Honorable Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ)
13. Chandler Smith, Legislative Director, Office of the Honorable Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA)
14. Olivia Speno, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable David Valadao (R-CA)
15. Noah Taicher, Foreign Affairs Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Russell Fry (R-SC)
16. Colin Witman, Senior Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Nick Langworthy (R-NY)
17. Eddie Zuckerbrot, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Honorable Wesley Bell (D-MO)

8. Breakdown of other expenses

Other Cost	Cost per participant
Security	\$1,400.00
Speaker Fees	\$1,000.00
Room Rentals and Setup	\$433.33
Hotels for contract staff	\$400.00
Tour Guide/Yad Vashem Guide	\$320.00
Meals for contract staff and guests	\$306.67
Airport Assistance	\$133.33
Miscellaneous	\$66.67
Photography	\$40.00
Transportation for contract staff and speakers	\$26.67
Entrance Fees	\$26.67
Tips	\$13.33
Total per participant=	\$4,166.67

**American Israel Education Foundation
Educational Seminar in Israel
U.S. Congressional Staff
February 14-22, 2026**

Itinerary

Saturday, February 14, 2026

- 9:10 AM Amtrak #164 departs Union Station for Seth Beas, Ariana Bhambhani, Taylor Fairless, James Gomez, Sarah Izaak, Daniel Lemire, Darby McQueen-Dever, Christopher Ringer, Rachel Salle, Chandler Smith, Olivia Speno, Noah Taicher, Colin Witman, Edward Zuckerbrot
- 12:22 PM Amtrak #164 arrives Newark for Seth Beas, Ariana Bhambhani, Taylor Fairless, James Gomez, Sarah Izaak, Daniel Lemire, Darby McQueen-Dever, Christopher Ringer, Rachel Salle, Chandler Smith, Olivia Speno, Noah Taicher, Colin Witman, Edward Zuckerbrot
- 3:55 PM United #84 departs Newark for Seth Beas, Ariana Bhambhani, Taylor Fairless, James Gomez, Sarah Izaak, Daniel Lemire, Darby McQueen-Dever, Christopher Ringer, Rachel Salle, Chandler Smith, Olivia Speno, Noah Taicher, Colin Witman, Edward Zuckerbrot

Sunday, February 15, 2026

- 9:20 AM United #84 arrives at Ben Gurion Airport for Seth Beas, Ariana Bhambhani, Taylor Fairless, James Gomez, Sarah Izaak, Daniel Lemire, Darby McQueen-Dever, Christopher Ringer, Rachel Salle, Chandler Smith, Olivia Speno, Noah Taicher, Colin Witman, Edward Zuckerbrot

Transfer to Jerusalem

Check-in to the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

- 12:15 –1:45 PM **Welcome Lunch and Orientation**
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

During the welcome and orientation, staff will lead a discussion about the objectives for the week ahead.

- 1:45 PM Depart

2:15 – 4:15 PM **Strategic Survey of Jerusalem, Part I: The Holy Basin**

Guided survey through the Old City of Jerusalem

- Old City of Jerusalem
- Western Wall
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The Old City of Jerusalem is home to the holiest shrines of the three monotheistic religions, including the Temple Mount, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Holy Basin is the historic location of Jerusalem and refers to the land surrounding the Old City, including the Mount of Olives, believed to be the departure point for Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem and the cemetery where Jews have been burying their dead for 2,500 years. The Holy Basin also includes the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site, and the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif), sacred ground for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Control over these sensitive areas remains among the largest disputes in the Middle East. The professionally guided survey will walk through all of these sites and others, educating trip participants on their historical impact and their role in today's political discussions.

4:30 PM Depart

5:00 – 6:00 PM **State of the Nation: This Moment in Israel**

With Matti Friedman

Journalist and Author

-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

During this session Matti Friedman will provide the participants with a synthesis of domestic political trends, current international affairs, and the general state of mind of the Israeli voters. Matti Friedman is a renowned reporter with a career that has taken him from Lebanon to Morocco, Cairo, Moscow and Washington, D.C., and to conflicts in Israel in the Caucasus. Mr. Friedman is a dynamic and insightful speaker who provides a journalist's perspective on how Israel's story is told by the international media, and how that media portrayal impacts the stories taking place on the ground.

6:15 PM Depart

6:30 – 8:00 PM **Dinner and Discussion**

-at Joy Restaurant

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel's complexities.

8:15 PM Depart

8:45 – 9:45 PM **Strategic Survey of Jerusalem, Part II: City of David**
Visit to an archeological excavation site
-at the City of David, Jerusalem

Jerusalem's City of David, more than any other site, represents the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The City of David is the site most archeologists agree to be the ancient city of Jerusalem that later became the capital of the united Israelite tribes under King David. This area is one of the most intensively excavated sides in the wider region. To Jewish Israelis, the site represents the beginning of their physical and emotional attachment to Jerusalem that has continued for over three thousand years. At the same time, much of the site is located in the predominantly Arab neighborhood of Silwan. The residents of Silwan, and the Palestinian Authority leadership are opposed to the archeological efforts being carried out in the City of David. In several instances, homes in Silwan were purchased and then destroyed to open up more areas for excavations. Palestinian leadership has denied the existence of any Jewish connection to Jerusalem.

10:00 PM Depart

10:30 PM Overnight at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

Monday, February 16, 2026

7:30 AM Breakfast on own
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

8:15 – 9:15 AM **The Changing Middle East: Regional Strategic Overview**
Briefing by Brig. Gen. (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel
Former Director, Counter-Terrorism Bureau at Prime Minister's Office
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

In order to understand the strategic threats facing Israel, participants must understand the unique situation facing Israel at the borders with the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Syria, all Iranian proxies. During this session Brig.-Gen (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel will provide an overview of each border, as well as the malign activity from Iran contributing to unrest in the region.

9:30 AM Depart

10:00 AM –12:00 PM **The Israeli Psyche, Part I: The Significance of the Holocaust**
Guided visit to Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance
Center

One cannot understand Israel's worldview without understanding the trauma of the Holocaust. Israelis view threats to its destruction in light of the events of the 1930s and 1940s, when the German government's threats to exterminate the Jewish people were not

taken seriously by the international community. This museum provides an important reference point as to how Israelis interpret the threat of an Iranian nuclear program and Iranian leaders committed to Israel's destruction. Yad Vashem has become a symbol of the Jewish people and its transformation from total helplessness to self-reliance and strength. Thus, a visit to Yad Vashem provides a historical context for the Jewish state. The museum's professional docent will guide the delegation through the main exhibit hall and the children's memorial.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 12:15 PM | Depart |
| 12:45 – 2:00 PM | Lunch
-at Luciana Restaurant |
| 2:00 PM | Depart |
| 3:30 – 4:30 PM | Israeli Politics 101
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem |

It is critical for trip participants to understand the parliamentary system in Israel. The guide will explain how the parliamentary party system works, how coalitions rise and fall, and how Israeli politics differ from American politics. Since the group will be visiting with government officials throughout the week, we believe it's important to provide this overview early in the seminar.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 4:45 PM | Depart |
| 5:30 – 6:00 PM | Israeli Democracy in Action, Part I: A View from the Opposition
Meeting with the Honorable Shelly Tal- Meron
Member of Knesset, Yesh Atid Party
-at the Knesset, Jerusalem |

It is customary for delegations to meet with members from the opposition. The Honorable Shelly Meron entered the Knesset in February 2023, as a member of the Yesh Atid party. She previously served in the Israeli Air Force for six years in various roles, including as a spokesperson, a flight instructor for Bell AH-1 Cobra pilots, and as an officer. She also worked for a technology company in Southeast Asia.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 6:15 PM – 6:45 PM | Israeli Democracy in Action, Part II: A View from the Coalition
Meeting with the Honorable Ohad Tal
Member of Knesset, Religious Zionism Party
-at the Knesset, Jerusalem |
|-------------------|---|

It is customary for delegations to meet with members of the coalition. The Honorable Ohad Tal is a member of Knesset for the National Religious Party–Religious Zionism. He

heads the Public Enterprises Knesset Committee and is a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Economics Committee, and Aliyah and Absorption Committee.

6:45 –7:00 PM **Visit to the Plenary**
-at the Knesset, Jerusalem

The group will visit the Knesset Plenary, Israel’s main assembly hall where the parliament conducts its core business. This is where bills are introduced, debated and voted on.

7:15 PM Depart

7:30 – 9:30 PM **Politics and Policy in Israel**

- Tuvia Chertok, Advisor, the Honorable Amichai Chikli, Likud Party
- Ariel Segal, Senior Political Advisor, the Honorable Yair Lapid, Yesh Atid Party
- Sharon Weinstein, Head of Bureau, the Honorable Sharren Haskel, New Hope Party

-at Dolphin Yam Restaurant

During this dinner the participants will have the opportunity to hear from their counterparts in Israel – staffers serving different members of the Israeli Knesset. The discussion will explore the difference between the American and Israeli political systems; the role of political staffers; and the views of the various Knesset members they serve on current issues affecting the region.

9:45 PM Depart

10:00 PM Overnight at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

7:30 AM Breakfast on own
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

8:15 – 9:15 AM **Israel’s Standing in the International Arena**
Meeting with Dr. Tal Becker
Former Senior Legal Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
-at the Vert Hotel, Jerusalem

During this session, Dr. Tal Becker will address the current political climate for Israel on the international stage. Dr. Becker is a senior member of the Israeli peace negotiation team. In this position, he is on the front lines of many of Israel’s most pressing diplomatic, legal and policy challenges. He is a veteran negotiator and key behind the scenes representative for Israel in a wide variety of contexts.

9:30 AM Depart

9:45 –10:45 AM **The Palestinian Perspective, Post-October 7**
Meeting with Ibrahim Dalalsha
Executive Director, Horizon Center for Political Studies & Media
Outreach
-at the American Colony Hotel, Jerusalem

This session will focus on Palestinian voices in a post-October 7th Israel. Ibrahim Dalalsha is the director of Horizon Center for Political Studies and Media Outreach, a private Palestinian think tank and consultancy firm in Ramallah. The center compiles political, legal, security and economic studies and other topics related to the Israeli -Palestinian conflict. Dalalsha has played an integral role in peace negotiations across the Middle East. His former career as a senior Palestinian political advisor at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem stretched across two decades. During this session he will provide an insider's view of the Palestinian political landscape.

11:00 AM Depart

11:30 AM –12:30 PM **The Israeli Psyche, Part II: The Cost of War**
Visit to Mount Herzl Military Cemetery
-at Mount Herzl Military Cemetery, Jerusalem

A critical piece of understanding Israeli society and culture is the role of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), mandatory army service, and veterans. Mount Herzl is the site of Israel's national cemetery, named after Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism. Israel's leaders and fallen soldiers are buried there. Every plot section in Mount Herzl has a broad plaza for memorial services. Most state memorial ceremonies for those killed in war are conducted in the National Military and Police cemetery. This visit will highlight the way Israel remembers its fallen and relates to the role of the military in as part of the fabric of the Jewish State.

12:45 PM Depart

1:00 – 2:00 PM Lunch
-at Hatzer Ein Karem Restaurant

2:00 PM Depart

3:00 – 4:00 PM **Inside the U.S.-Israel Relationship**
Meeting with the Honorable Mike Huckabee
United State Ambassador to the State of Israel
-at the United States Embassy, Jerusalem

During this meeting, U.S. Ambassador to Israel, the Honorable Mike Huckabee will share the U.S. perspective on the current situation in Gaza, regional threats from Iranian proxies, and the potential for U.S.-Israel cooperation.

4:15 PM Depart

4:30 PM Arrive at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

5:45 – 7:00 PM **Minority Activism in Israeli Society**
Panel Discussion with:
▪ Naftali Aklum, CEO, Yerus Project
▪ Jonathan Elkoury, LGBTQ+ Activist and Public Diplomacy Advisor
▪ Bella Talovski, Head of Political Activism, Tzedek Centers
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

As a liberal, democratic state, Israel is rooted in liberty, the rule of law, free and fair elections, and full civil rights for all citizens. During this session the group will hear from political activists across the country about ways they are driving social and political change.

7:00 PM Depart

7:15 – 9:15 PM **Dinner and Discussion**
-at Happy Fish Restaurant

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel's complexities.

9:30 PM Overnight at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

7:00 AM Breakfast on own
-at the Mamilla Hotel, Jerusalem

8:00 AM Depart

8:30 – 9:00 AM **Enroute Briefing: The History of Gaza, 1948-October 6**

During this en route briefing, the tour guide will provide a brief history of the Gaza Strip, the small, coastal territory that shares borders with Egypt and Israel.

9:30 – 10:30 AM **October 7, Part I: Bearing Witness**
Experience October 7 through the eyes of Israeli survivors
-Israel-Is, Sderot

On October 7, the Jewish communities living along the Gaza border were destroyed, nearly 1,200 Israelis were killed, and 251 were kidnapped. During the visit to Sderot, participants will bear witness to the Hamas invasion and massacre. They will hear what happened to the community on October 7, and how the IDF regained control.

10:30 – 10:45 AM **The Proximity: Lookout into Gaza**
-Tatzpit Kobi, Sderot

This session will provide a status update on the evolving situation in the Gaza strip. Participants will hear about Israel's efforts to remove Hamas from Gaza, as well as efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the civilian population.

11:00 AM Depart

11:30 – 12:15 PM **October 7, Part II: The Nova Party**
Visit the site of the NOVA music festival massacre
With Remo Salman El- Hozayel, Nova survivor
-at Reim Forest

When Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel on October 7, they also massacred and kidnapped hundreds of young civilians at a music festival taking place in the Gaza envelope area. Since then, family members created a moving memorial to their loved ones that will help the participants understand the enormity of the events of the days and the trauma experienced by Israeli society.

12:30 PM Depart

1:00 – 2:00 PM Lunch
-at Haimos Restaurant

2:00 PM Depart

2:45 – 4:15 PM **Gaza: The Day After**
Briefing with CMCC representative
-at the Civilian-Military Coordination Center (CMCC), Kiryat Gat

This session will examine what the future of Gaza may look like—examining humanitarian needs, security concerns, and the challenges and choices that will shape the region’s future.

4:30 PM Depart

6:00 – 7:00 PM **The Threat from Iran**
Interview with Yonah Jeremy Bob
Author and Journalist
-at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

In this session, journalist and author Yonah Jeremy Bob will update the participants on the recent Israel-Iran war. He will discuss the shifting regional alliances, global power dynamics, and how this conflict could reshape the Middle East.

7:15 – 9:15 PM **Citizen-Soldiers: The IDF in Israeli Society**
Dinner with IDF Reservists

- Sergeant Maj. (Res.) Ilai Patt
- First Sergeant (Res.) Yoav Tzivoni
- Captain (Res.) Noga Ventura

-at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

In Israel, military service is mandatory for everyone over the age of 18, with several exceptions. Most Israelis join the army right after high school and serve for three years. Military service does not end when soldiers leave active duty — most men and many women continue serving for years as reservists (miluim), forming the backbone of the country’s emergency military force. These civilians drop everything in times of war or crisis — jobs, families, and studies — to defend the country, reflecting how deeply national security is woven into everyday life. Most reservists remain on call until their early 40s (and sometimes later for officers or specialists), typically serving several weeks per year, but in wartime they can be mobilized for months, making reserve duty one of the most demanding and defining civic obligations in Israeli society. During this dinner, the group will hear from three reservists about the sacrifices they made during the war.

9:30 PM Overnight at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

Thursday, February 19, 2026

- 7:30 AM Breakfast on own
-at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv
- 8:30 AM Depart
- 9:30 –11:00 AM **The West Bank Up-Close: A Situational Assessment**
Briefing with Col. (res.) Miri Eisin
Fellow, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Reichman
University
-at the Alfei Menashe overlook

During this briefing, Col. (ret) Miri Eisen will examine the West Bank, highlighting its strategic importance to Israel’s security and regional stability. She will focus on the makeup of Palestinian society, internal issues and security challenges inherent in the West Bank, the role of the Palestinian Authority (P.A.), and P.A. coordination with Israeli bodies.

- 11:00 AM Depart
- 12:30 –1:30 PM **Shared Society in Times of Crisis**
Meeting with Ibrahim Abu Ahmed
Arab-Israeli Activist and Writer
-at Michel House, Nazareth

Approximately 22% of Israeli residents are part of the non-Jewish minority, which includes, among others, Muslims, Christians, and Druze. In this session we will hear from Arab-Israeli Activist and writer Ibrahim Abu Ahmed. He will discuss the role of the Arab citizens of Israel, examining their social, cultural and economic contributions, the challenges they face, and their unique position in shaping a shared future built on partnership and mutual responsibility.

- 1:30 – 2:15 PM Lunch
-at Michel House, Nazareth
- 2:30 PM Depart
- 3:30 – 5:00 PM **Israel’s Northern Front, Part I: Lebanon**
Strategic Briefing by Lt. Col. (ret.) Sarit Zehavi
Director, Alma Research Center
-at the Alma Research Center

Lt. Col. Zehavi will give a briefing on security threats coming from the Lebanese border, and the role Iran plays in supporting Hezbollah terrorism against Israel. As a lifelong resident of the North, she will also share her experiences living on the border with Lebanon. Lt. Col.

(Res.) Sarit Zehavi served 15 years in the IDF in Military Intelligence –first in the Research and Analysis Branch, and later in the Northern Command. During her military service she briefed hundreds of delegations, ranging from U.S. Senators, Congressmen and politicians to global military commanders, senior journalists and visiting VIP delegations. She is the founder/director of Alma, an educational research center focusing on the security issues of Israel’s northern border. Zehavi has authored many position papers focusing on Lebanon, Syria and Israel’s national security challenges, and continues to brief delegations on these topics.

5:00 PM Depart

6:00 PM Check-in to Gomeh Hotel, Tiberius

6:30 –7:30 PM **U.S.-Israel Defense Cooperation**
Briefing by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Gideon Weiss
Vice President for International Business Development, Rafael
-at the Gomeh Hotel, Tiberius

During this session, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Gideon Weiss will brief the group on U.S.–Israel defense cooperation. He will discuss and examine strategic partnerships, security challenges, and ongoing military collaboration.

7:45 PM Depart

8:00 – 9:30 PM **Dinner and Discussion**
-at Magdalena Restaurant

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel’s complexities.

9:45 PM Depart

10:00 PM Overnight at the Gomeh Hotel, Tiberius

Friday, February, 2026

7:00 AM Breakfast on own
-at the Gomeh Hotel, Tiberius

8:00 AM Depart

- 8:15 – 9:45 AM **Historical Significance of the Sea of Galilee**
Guided Survey of Christian Sites
- Mt. of Beatitudes
 - Capernaum

As part of the seminar’s focus on the complex religious fabric of Israeli society, the delegation will be visiting several of the most sacred sites for Christians in the Holy Land. Included is a guided survey and discussion of some of the most important events in the life of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. Just as strategic surveys in Jerusalem focused on Jewish, Muslim, and Christian history and claims to the land, the site visits to the Christian sites help provide context for the competing religious narratives for the land of Israel. For example, we will be visiting the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, the most studied and read speech of any religion in history. Our guide will also lead discussions through Capernaum.

9:45 AM Depart

10:00 –10:45 AM **Enroute Briefing: The History of Hezbollah**

During the drive to Israel’s border with Lebanon, the guide will provide a history of Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed terrorist group based in Lebanon dedicated to Israel’s destruction. The terrorist group’s influence in Lebanese politics, massive weapons arsenal and use of Lebanese civilians as human shields made the Iranian proxy a serious threat to Israel leading up to the current war. Hezbollah has a global reach and has killed more Americans than any terrorist group other than al-Qaeda.

10:45 AM –12:00 PM **Israel’s Northern Front, Part II: Syria**
Strategic Briefing by Maj. (Res.) Ilan Shulman
-at the Merom Golan Hotel, Golan Heights

During this session, Maj. Ilan Shulman will brief the group on the recent developments in Syria since the fall of the Assad regime. After a brutal civil war, Syria is now a chaotic assembly of disparate tribes, ruled by Ahmed Hussein al-Sharaa (known as al-Julani), a Syrian politician and former rebel commander serving as the president of Syria since January 2025. Shulman will discuss the implications of al-Julani’s leadership on the country of Syria, Israel’s unique relationship with the Druze community, and the potential for Syrian relations with Israel.

12:00 –12:45 PM Lunch
-Moadon Restaurant

12:45 PM Depart

1:15 –1:45 PM **Strategic Survey of the Syrian Border**
Overlook Briefing by Maj. (Res.) Ilan Shulman
-at the Quneitra Overlook

With the fall of the Assad regime, the situation in Syria is one of the most important stories in the Middle East. Maj. Ilan Shulman will discuss the implications for Israel’s security while uncertainly reigns there. This outlook will give participants an opportunity to see the proximity to Syria and better understand the physical terrain.

2:00 PM Depart

5:00 –7:00 PM Arrive at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

7:15 PM Depart

7:30 – 9:30 PM **Reflections on the Sabbath**
Traditional Sabbath Eve dinner
Hosted by Hana and Aviad Glickman
-at their home, Tel Aviv

Israel, the only Jewish country in the world, boasts the unique tradition of honoring the Jewish Sabbath from Friday sundown until Saturday sundown. 80 percent of the Israeli population will commemorate the Sabbath, in various forms, which typically include a family dinner and special blessings. Experiencing this ritual firsthand offers insight into the social and cultural foundations that shape Israeli life.

9:45 PM Depart

10:00 PM Overnight at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

Saturday, February 21, 2026

8:00 AM Breakfast on own
-at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

9:00 –10:00 AM **Israel as a Jewish State: Religion, Peoplehood, and Nationality**
With Dr. Einat Wilf
Author and former Member of the Knesset
-at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

During this session, Dr. Einat Wilf will discuss Israel as a Jewish state through the lense of religion, peoplehood, and nationality. She will examine key ideas, debates, and historical foundations shaping Jewish self-determination and Israel’s national identity in a modern, democratic context. Dr. Einat Wilf is a leading intellectual and original thinker on matters of

foreign policy, economics, educations, and Israel and the Jewish people. A member of the Israeli Parliament from 2010-2013, Dr. Wilf is considered one of Israel's most articulate representatives on the international stage. She is the author of six books that explore key issues in Israel Society.

10:15 AM Depart

10:30 –11:30 AM **Israeli Society Through Artists' Eyes**
Guided Survey of Israeli Street Art
-at Florentin, Tel Aviv

The group will go on a guided walk through Tel Aviv's Florentin neighborhood. They will have an opportunity to view street art, and explore how Israeli artists reflect social issues, identity, and everyday life through murals and graffiti in Tel Aviv's public spaces.

11:45 PM Depart

12:00 –1:00 PM **Independence Trail**
Walking tour of Tel Aviv

This walking survey will explore the landmark locations and institutions established in the first modern Hebrew city, which reflect the values upon which the State of Israel was founded. These include the principles of freedom, justice, and equal social and political rights; as well as freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture. These values are the basis of the relationship between the United States and Israel.

1:00 PM Depart

1:15 – 2:15 PM Lunch
-at Ha'achim Restaurant

2:30 PM Depart

3:00 – 4:00 PM **The Diversity of Israel**
-at Shuk Hapishpashim, Jaffa

The ancient city of Jaffa, now part of the modern Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality, has a rich history reflecting the different communities that have used it as a port city. Today, a diverse community of Jews, Christians and Muslims call it home. This visit to Jaffa will cover the ancient and modern city, allowing participants to have a deep understanding of different Israeli populations as well as the challenges and opportunities of a shared society.

4:15 PM Depart

4:30 PM Arrive at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

7:00 – 9:00 PM **Closing Dinner: Reflections on the Week**
-at the Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv

The closing dinner provides an opportunity for participants to process the scope of the week, from the religious center of the Judeo-Christian world in Jerusalem, to the bustling economic powerhouse of Tel Aviv; and the conflict plagued borders with Gaza, Syria and Lebanon. We will process the range of topics explored, including the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership, prospects for Arab-Israeli peace, the experience of minorities in Israel, as well as greater existential threats throughout the region. Participants will also have the opportunity to share their takeaways and ask any lingering questions that weren't covered during the week.

9:00 PM Depart for Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv

9:30 PM Arrive at Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv

Sunday, February 22, 2026

12:20 AM United #73 departs Tel Aviv for Seth Beas, Ariana Bhambhani, Taylor Fairless, James Gomez, Sarah Izaak, Daniel Lemire, Darby McQueen-Dever, Christopher Ringer, Rachel Salle, Chandler Smith, Olivia Speno, Noah Taicher, Colin Witman, Edward Zuckerbrot

5:55 AM United #73 arrives Dulles for Seth Beas, Ariana Bhambhani, Taylor Fairless, James Gomez, Sarah Izaak, Daniel Lemire, Darby McQueen-Dever, Christopher Ringer, Rachel Salle, Chandler Smith, Olivia Speno, Noah Taicher, Colin Witman, Edward Zuckerbrot

Michael Guest, Mississippi
Chairman
Mark DeSaulnier, California
Ranking Member

Andrew R. Garbarino, New York
Ashley Hinson, Iowa
Nathaniel Moran, Texas
Brad Knott, North Carolina

Deborah K. Ross, North Carolina
Glenn F. Ivey, Maryland
Sylvia R. Garcia, Texas
Suhas Subramanyam, Virginia



ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

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February 12, 2026

Ms. Olivia Speno
Office of the Honorable David G. Valadao
2465 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Speno:

Pursuant to House Rule 25, clause 5(d)(2), the Committee on Ethics hereby approves your proposed trip to Israel,¹ scheduled for February 14 to 22, 2026, sponsored by American Israel Education Foundation.

You must complete an Employee Post-Travel Disclosure Form (which your employing Member must also sign) and file it, together with a Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form completed by the trip sponsor, with the Clerk of the House within 15 days after your return from travel. As part of that filing, you are also required to attach a copy of this letter and both the Traveler and Primary Trip Sponsor Forms (including attachments) you previously submitted to the Committee in seeking pre-approval for this trip. If you are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement, you must also report all travel expenses totaling more than \$525 from a single source on the "Travel" schedule of your annual Financial Disclosure Statement covering this calendar year. Finally, Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting information provided to the Committee for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

Because the trip may involve meetings with foreign government representatives, we note that House employees may accept, under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), gifts "of minimal value [currently \$525] tendered as a souvenir or mark of courtesy" by a foreign government. Any tangible gifts valued in excess of minimal value received from a foreign government must, within 60 days of acceptance, be disclosed on a Form for Disclosing Gifts from Foreign Governments and either turned over to the Clerk of the House, or, with the written approval of the Committee, retained for official use.

¹ Please be aware that the Committee's review of the proposed trip does not extend to either the security situation in the destination country or security related to foreign travel in general. We recommend you contact the Office of House Security (OHS) for a safety and security briefing prior to your departure. OHS may be reached at (202) 226-2044 or ohsstaff@mail.house.gov. House travelers should also register for the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at <https://step.state.gov>.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.

Sincerely,



Michael Guest
Chairman



Mark DeSaulnier
Ranking Member

MG/MD:nl