

RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within 30 days of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building. **This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

RECEIVED Stamp
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE
PUBLIC RECORDS
2025 MAY 23 AM 11:47

Certification: In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:

Private Sponsor(s):
American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)

Travel Dates:
04/20/2025 to 04/25/2025

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Relationship to Traveler:

Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
\$10,467.45	\$1,465.00	\$950.11	\$6,880.00

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- The final Employee Pre-Travel Authorization (Form RE-1)
- The final Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

5/21/2025

Date

PHILIP LETSOU

Printed Name of Traveler

Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

5/21/2025

Date

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
Meals	\$950.11	Due to the war, food and service prices have increased
Misc. Expenses	\$5,158.78	The Miscellaneous Expenses decreased because security costs were lower than originally expected. Also, the number of conference room rentals was lower than anticipated.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Explanation: There were no changes to the pre-approved itinerary.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Explanation: There were no additional changes to the pre-approved trip.



PRESIDENT
LEE ROSENBERG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ARNE CHRISTENSON

251 H STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC
20001
TEL 202.639.5180

Tax ID# 52-1823781

January 22, 2025

Philip Letsou
Chief of Staff
Office of the Honorable Bernie Moreno
Washington, D.C., 20002

Dear Philip,

On behalf of the American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF), we would like to invite you to participate in an AIEF Israel Seminar, April 20-25, 2025.

This seminar will delve into the critical issues facing Israel in the wake of the October 7 massacre, including: the evolving situation in Gaza; security threats confronting Israel on its northern borders; and the threat posed by Iran and Iranian proxies in the region.

The program will include in-depth briefings and conversations with Israeli political leaders and military officials; U.S. government officials; heads of non-governmental organizations; and prominent academics and journalists. The delegation will also visit historic and religious sites in Jerusalem and the Galilee.

All trip-related expenses will be paid for by AIEF, and all aspects of the trip will be in full conformity with Senate Ethics rules. AIEF will provide additional information to assure your compliance with ethics rules.

We hope you will be able to join us on what promises to be a rich, insightful, and educational trip. To confirm your participation, please complete the [Participant Confirmation Form](#) at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions, please contact our Israel Seminars Director Julie Peretz at (240) 476-2852 or jperetz@aiefdn.org.

Sincerely,

Arne Christenson
Executive Director

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Date/Time Stamp

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220**. Incomplete and late travel submissions will not be considered or approved.

Name of Traveler:
PHILIP LETSOU

Employing Office/Committee:
MORENO, BERNIE

Private Sponsor(s):
American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)

Destination(s):
Jerusalem, Israel Golan Heights, Israel Herzliya, Israel

Travel Dates:
04/20/2025 to 04/25/2025

NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you must notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

Philip is the Senator's Chief of Staff and advises the Senator on many policy issue areas, including foreign relations and the Middle East. The trip activities will better enable Philip to advise the Senator on these policy issues.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip?
No

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
N/A

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

3/26/25

Date



Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER
(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms,
Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

Bernie Moreno
(Print Senator's/Officer's Name)

hereby authorize

Philip Letsou
(Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.

☐ (signify "yes" by checking box)

3/25/25

Date



Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF): AIEF Israel Seminar for Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH) and Staff

 PHILIP LETSOU

Title:

None

Employing Office/Committee:

MORENO, BERNIE

Duty Station:

WASHINGTON, DC

Destination(s):

Jerusalem, Israel

Golan Heights, Israel

Herzliya, Israel

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

Philip is the Senator's Chief of Staff and advises the Senator on many policy issue areas, including foreign relations and the Middle East. The trip activities will better enable Philip to advise the Senator on these policy issues.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:

None

Organization Information

Organization Name

American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?

☒ Yes

☐ No

§501(c)(3) Organization Type

Public Charity

Address

251 H Street NW

Address 2 (Optional)

None

City, State Zip

Washington DC, District Of Columbia 20001 United States

Phone Number

(240) 476-2852

Organization URL

History of Congressional Travel

Founded in 1988, the American Israel Education Foundation Inc. (AIEF) funds Israel Seminars for members of Congress, Capitol Hill staffers, state and local officials, and other political influentials. These trips to Israel are among the most critical programs AIEF supports on behalf of the U.S.-Israel relationship. These educational seminars allow policy makers to understand the complex historical, religious and geographic context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Participants meet with Israeli government officials, military officers, members of the Knesset, U.S. government officials, Palestinian Authority officials and leading academics and journalists. For many of the participants, who make important decisions impacting Israel and the Middle East, these trips are their first, and sometimes, only exposure to the country.

Educational Activities

AIEF grants sponsor innovative programming to educate a wide audience, including college students, members of Congress and their staff, and political professionals. In addition to educational seminars, AIEF sponsors leadership training and briefings on the Middle East and the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and do not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

☒ I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.

- ☒ I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.
- ☒ I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

None Entered

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

This seminar, which will be on the ground in Israel for four days, is specifically designed to explore foreign policy and defense issues related to the U.S.-Israel relationship. Some of the critical issues to be addressed include: Israel in the wake of the October 7 massacre; the evolving situation in Gaza; security threats confronting Israel on its northern border; and the threat posed by a nuclear Iran. The seminar will consist of discussions with Israeli government officials, military officers, Members of the Knesset, U.S. officials; as well as site surveys of the northern borders with Lebanon and Syria.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

AIEF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with the mission of providing educational programming about the U.S.-Israel relationship. This delegation will have the opportunity to meet with a diverse group of Israelis and see first-hand the outcome of U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation in the region.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

There are no grantmaking organizations.

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

- ☒ The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

- ☒ The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
- ☒ No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

- ☒ The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

- ☐ The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

- ☒ Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.
- ☒ Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

- 1** Members and staff from the House of Representatives will not receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
04/20/2025 @ 07:00 AM



Trip End Date/Time:
04/25/2025 @ 10:22 AM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$10,467.45 | Accompanying Family Member: \$0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Airfare	Business	\$9,867.45

Note

Roundtrip business class ticket on a commercial airline

Ground Transportation	Charter	\$600.00
-----------------------	---------	----------

Note

Charter bus on the ground in Israel

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$1,465.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
04/21/2025	04/22/2025	King David Hotel	Jerusalem	None	Israel	1	\$402.00	No
04/22/2025	04/23/2025	Merom Golan Hotel	Golan Heights	None	Israel	1	\$314.00	Yes

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
----------	-----------	----------	------	-------	---------	--------	------------	----------------------

Cost Exceeds Per Diem Reason

This hotel is \$9 over the State Department per diem rate. Due to the ongoing war, and the evacuation of civilians from the north, hotel rooms are limited.

04/23/2025	04/25/2025	Ritz Carlton	Herzliya	None	Israel	2	\$374.50	No
------------	------------	--------------	----------	------	--------	---	----------	----

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$690.00)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
04/21/2025	\$30.00	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$180.00	Jerusalem	None	Israel	No
04/22/2025	\$20.00	\$40.00	\$86.00	\$0.00	\$146.00	Golan Heights	None	Israel	No
04/23/2025	\$32.00	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$182.00	Herzliya	None	Israel	No
04/24/2025	\$32.00	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$182.00	Herzliya	None	Israel	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$6,880.00)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
Conference Fees	\$1,000.00	Speaker fees
Conference Fees	\$780.00	room rentals, airport assistance, entrance fees, photography, tips
Conference Fees	\$420.00	Tour guide
Other (security)	\$3,000.00	
Other (contract staff, speaker, guest meals and hotels)	\$1,680.00	

Additional Attachments**Document Name**

There are no additional attachments.

DocuSign Envelope ID: 50BC6F9B-4A3D-451F-A1C4-2D5661537966

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Trip Name: AIEF Israel Seminar for Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH) & Staff

Travel Date(s): April 20-25, 2025

Travel Destination(s): Israel

Sponsor: American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF), INC

Rachel Hirsch*(printed name of sponsor representative)*Chief Legal Counsel*(title)*

DocuSigned by:

Rachel Hirsch

5065F135A2CE4E2

*(signature of sponsor representative)*4/7/2025 | 13:12 EDT*(date)*

American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)**Educational Seminar in Israel****Senator Bernie Moreno (R-OH) and staff****April 20-25, 2025****Senate Invitees**

1. The Honorable Bernie Moreno (R-OH)
2. Philip Letsou, Chief of Staff, The Honorable Bernie Moreno (R-OH)

**American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)
Educational Seminar in Israel
Senator Bernie Moreno (R-OH) and Staff
April 20-25, 2025**

Itinerary

Sunday, April 20

7:00 AM United Airlines flight #601 departs Cleveland for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno

7:00 AM United Airlines flight #3475 departs Washington, D.C. for Letsou

8:23 AM United Airlines flight #3475 arrives Newark for Letsou

8:34 AM United Airlines flight #601 arrives Newark for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno

1:30 PM El AL #28 departs Newark for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno, Letsou

Monday, April 21

6:55 AM El AL #28 arrives Tel Aviv for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno, Letsou

10:00-11:00 AM Depart for Jerusalem

11:00-12:00 PM Check-in to the King David Hotel, Jerusalem

12:00-1:15 PM **Welcome and Orientation Lunch**
-at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem

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

1:15-1:30 PM Depart

1:30-2:00 PM **Visit Garden of Gethsemane**

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. The garden of Gethsemane is located at the bottom of the Mount of Olives and is where Jesus spent his final hours and prayed his final prayers before his arrest.

2:00-2:30 PM Depart

2:30-3:30 PM **A View from The U.S. Embassy**
Meeting with The Honorable Stephanie Hallett, Chargé d’Affaires
-at the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem

During this discussion, Chargé d’Affaires Stephanie Hallett will share the U.S. perspective on the evolving situation in Gaza, regional threats from Iranian proxies, and the potential for Arab-Israeli cooperation.

3:30-4:00 PM Depart

4:00-5:00 PM **A View from the Opposition**
Conversation with Yair Lapid, Leader of the Opposition
Head of Yesh Atid Party
-at the Knesset

It is customary for delegations to meet with members from the coalition and opposition parties. Yair Lapid is an Israeli politician and former journalist who is the Chairman of the centrist Yesh Atid party, and Leader of the Opposition since January 2023. Previously he served as the 14th prime minister of Israel, the alternate prime minister of Israel and minister of Foreign Affairs from 2021 to 2022.

5:00-5:15 PM **Meet & Greet: Speaker of The Knesset**
Amir Ohana, Speaker of the Knesset
-at his office

It is customary for members of Congress to meet with the Israeli Speaker of the Knesset. The Honorable Amir Ohana is an Israeli lawyer, former Shin Bet official and politician who has served as the Speaker of the Knesset since 2022, and as a member of the Knesset for Likud. He previously held the posts of Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Security. Ohana is a veteran of the acclaimed Israeli Shin Bet security agency, and an attorney. He achieved the rank of major in the IDF and continues to serve in reserve duty.

5:15-5:30 PM Depart

5:30-6:00 PM Arrive at the Prime Minister’s Office

6:00-7:00 PM **A View from The Prime Minister’s Office**
Meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
-at the Prime Minister’s Office

It is customary for members of Congress to meet with Israel’s Prime Minister, to hear the official perspective of the State of Israel on issues impacting the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the Chairman of the Likud party. He previously served as Israel's Prime Minister for 12 years, ending in June 2021. He was then re-elected in December 2022. He is Israel's longest serving Prime Minister.

7:00-7:30 PM Depart
7:30-8:45 PM **Dinner**
-at Angelica Restaurant
8:45-9:00 PM Depart
9:00-10:00 PM **Late Night Tour of City of David**

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.

10:30 PM Overnight at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem

Tuesday, April 22

7:45-8:00 AM Breakfast on own
-at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem
8:00-8:30 AM Depart
8:30-10:00 AM **Generational Sacrifice: Honoring Israel's Fallen Soldiers**
Visit Israel's National Cemetery, Mt. Herzl

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.

10:00-12:15 PM Depart for the North

12:15-2:15 PM **Regional Strategic Overview**
Lunch Briefing by Brig. Gen. (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel
Former Director, Counter-Terrorism Bureau at Prime Minister's Office
-at Tanduka

This session will provide an update on the current state of the war against Hamas in Gaza, and the tensions on the northern border where Israelis face rocket fire from Hezbollah. Brig.-Gen (Res.) is the past director of the Counter-Terrorism Bureau at the Office of the Prime Minister, where he served until 2012. His duties included developing a national policy for border protection, cargo and aviation security, and advanced technology for public security. He is a veteran of the "Golani" Infantry Corp; he held command positions in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and South Lebanon. Today he is a Fellow at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at IDC Herzliya.

2:15-3:15 PM Depart

3:15-3:30 PM **Historic and Religious Significance of The Galilee Region**

- Capernaum
- Primacy of Peter

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. Our guide will lead discussions through Capernaum and St. Peter's Church.

3:30-4:30 PM Depart

4:30-5:30 PM **Israel's Northern Border Concerns: A Look into Lebanon**
Strategic briefing with Lt. Col. (Res.) Eyal Dror
-at Kibbutz Sasa

During this visit to Israel's border with Lebanon, Lt. Col. (Res.) Eyal Dror will provide an overview of Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed terrorist group based in Lebanon that is dedicated to Israel's destruction. When Hezbollah started to fire on Israel on October 7, just hours after Hamas terrorists fired thousands of rockets and infiltrated the country, northern Israeli communities were immediately at risk. The visit to Kibbutz Sasa will demonstrate the

impact on one such community and highlight for participants the displacement of tens of thousands of Israelis who were forced to evacuate while their homes are under fire from Hezbollah.

- 5:30-6:30 PM Depart for the Syrian Border
- 6:30-7:30 PM Check-in to the Merom Golan Hotel, Golan Heights
- 7:30-9:30 PM **Returning North: Meeting with Israeli residents of the North**
Dinner with:
- Boaz Perry, Kibbutz Malkiya
 - Liat Cohen Reviv, Metula
- at Habokrim

The war against Hezbollah wreaked havoc on Northern Israel. Residents were displaced and towns were damaged extensively. During this session with residents from the north, participants will be able to understand the impact of the war on civilian lives, the need to rebuild, and the necessity of a strong, secured border and adherence to U.N. resolution 1701.

- 9:30 PM Overnight at the Merom Golan Hotel, Golan Heights

Wednesday, April 23

- 8:00-8:15 AM Breakfast on own
- 8:15-9:15 AM **Israel's Northern Border Concerns: Syria – Part I**
Conversation with Maj. Ilan Schulman
-at the Merom Golan Hotel

During this session Maj. Ilan Schulman will provide an overview of the Syrian civil war, and its impact on Israel and the wider Middle East region. Captain (Res.) Ilan Shulman, a disabled IDF veteran, divides his time guiding geopolitical tours on the Galilee and Golan Heights, lecturing to students, giving geo-political briefings for delegations through various Israeli foreign ministry programs, and fulfilling his IDF reserve duties in the Northern Command's intelligence unit. Shulman was raised in Kibbutz Merom Golan near Israel's border with Syria, where one of his favorite jobs was herding the kibbutz cattle. Shulman served in the IDF's paratrooper's unit, rising to the position of company commander. He holds a BA in Israel and Middle East Studies.

- 9:15-9:30 AM Depart

9:30-11:00 AM **Israel's Northern Border Concerns: Syria – Part II**
Strategic briefing on Syrian border with Maj. Ilan Schulman

With the fall of the Assad regime, Syria is one of the most important stories in the Middle East. Additionally, it raises questions about Israel's security while uncertainly reigns there. This outlook will give participants an opportunity to see the proximity to Syria and understand better the IDF's deployment. This visit will allow the delegation to connect the strategic briefing with the physical terrain.

11:00-12:30 PM Depart

12:30-2:30 PM **U.S. – Israel Defense and Technology Cooperation**
Lunch briefing with Gidi Weiss
Vice President, International Business Development, Rafael
-at Refael

During this session, Mr. Weiss will explain the U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation that has led to the country's multi-tiered missile defense system. Gideon (Gidi) Weiss is Vice President for International Business Development at Rafael's Air & C4ISR Systems Division. He is responsible for leading, directing and coordinating marketing, business development and sales activities across Rafael's international markets.

2:30-4:30 PM Depart

4:30-5:30 PM **Israel's Narrow Waistline: The Eastern Front**
Col. (Res.) Miri Eisin
Senior Fellow, International Institute for Counter Terrorism,
Reichman University
-at Alfei Menashe

Alfei Menashe is a Jewish community located on the western edge of the West Bank. Less than 10 miles from the Mediterranean Sea, Alfei Menashe provides a unique vantage point to discuss Israeli settlement policy, the routing of the security barrier, as well as Israel's narrow waistline. The sliver of Israeli land west of the West Bank is often referred to as the Hadera-Gadera rectangle, with the city of Hadera denoting the northern point, and the city of Hadera the southern point. The Hadera-Gadera rectangle is home to over 50 percent of Israel's population, as well as civilian infrastructure. The area is also home to Israel's "silicon valley", as well as Ben Gurion international airport. The discussion at Alfei Menashe will allow participants to see firsthand the proximity of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in both Israel and the West Bank; as well as the strategic threats faced by the Israeli population living in Israel's narrow waistline.

5:30-6:30 PM Depart

6:30-7:30 PM Check-in to the Ritz Carlton, Herzliya

7:30-9:30 PM **Israelis and Palestinians: What the Future Holds**
Dinner with Ohad Hemo
Israeli journalist and author
-at the Ritz Carlton, Herzliya

For 15 years, as a reporter for all three of Israel's main channels, Ohad Hemo has taken the pulse of the Palestinian street and been the eyes and ears of ordinary Israelis hungry to understand the nuances of Palestinian society and politics. As a moment of enormous change in the Middle East and the rise of an Arab party in Israel's ruling coalition, Hemo will delve into the complexities of Gaza and the West Bank, into the thinking of Fatah and Hamas leaders, the reality of the Abraham Accords and young Palestinians in the West Bank and inside Israel itself.

9:30 PM Overnight at the Ritz Carlton, Herzliya

Thursday, April 24

7:30-8:15 AM Breakfast on Own

8:15-8:30 AM Depart

8:30-9:45 AM **Pursuing Peace: The Future of The Abraham Accords**
Meeting with his Excellency Mohamed Al Khaja
United Arab Emirates Ambassador to Israel
-at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

Since Israel's founding, the Jewish state has sought to reach a just and lasting solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict, and a comprehensive regional peace. The United States has been closely involved in negotiations between Israel and several Arab states, including – most recently - the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan – under the Abraham Accords. This session will explore the Abraham Accords, and prospects for regional peace following these historic agreements. His Excellency Mohamed Al Khaja was sworn in as the first UAE Ambassador to Israel in 2021.

9:45-10:15 AM Depart

10:15-10:30 AM Arrive at the Ministry of Defense

10:30-11:30 AM **U.S.-Israel Strategic Collaborations: Subterranean Threats**
Meeting with Col. Ittai Bar Ilan
Head, Land Systems Division, Defense Research and Development
Directorate
-at the Ministry of Defense

Tunnels have played a critical and devastating role in the wars against Hamas and Hezbollah. The research arm of the Ministry of Defense must continuously develop new technologies and strategies for dealing with this threat. This effort is led by Col. Bar Ilan who will speak to the important U.S.-Israel collaboration in tunnel detection, the success in this war and the challenges that lay ahead.

11:30-12:45 PM **IDF Regional Overview and Strategic Briefing**
Meeting with Brig. Gen. Benny Gal
Head of IDF Strategic Division
-at the Ministry of Defense

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 home to Iranian proxies. This briefing will provide an overview of each border, as well as the malign activity from Iran contributing to unrest in the region.

12:45-1:15 PM Depart

1:15-3:00 PM **Innovation Nations: U.S.-Israel Tech Opportunities**
Startup Nation Central (SNC)

Israel is a giant when it comes to innovation: a global leader in R&D spending and Venture Capital investment, and home to global R&D centers for the likes of Google, Apple and IBM. This session will include a discussion with entrepreneurs representing Israeli innovation and ingenuity that has had enormous impact both in Israel and abroad.

3:00-3:30 PM Depart

3:30-5:00 PM **The Cost of Sacrifice: A Nation of Resilience**

- Meet with recovering soldiers
- Wheelchair Basketball

-at Beit Halochem

Beit Halochem is a unique rehabilitation, sports and recreation center serving disabled veterans and their families. It provides a place for veterans to undergo various rehabilitative treatments, for as long as they need. Emphasis is placed on sport as a rehabilitative tool along with a wide array of social and cultural programs. This session will discuss how

centers like Beit Halochem serve the pressing needs of Israel's wounded soldiers and veterans.

5:00-5:30 PM Depart for Herzliya

6:45-7:45 PM **Israel in a Post October 7th World**
Meeting with Haviv Rettig Gur
Senior Analyst at The Times of Israel
-at the Ritz Carlton, Herzliya

In this closing session, journalist Haviv Rettig Gur will bring together the different elements of the trip to help participants fully understand this moment in time, the challenges Israel faces post-October 7, and the role of the U.S.-Israel relationship. It will also lay out the complexities of "the day after" and some possibilities for how Israel can move forward both locally and regionally.

7:45-8:15 PM Depart

8:15-9:30 PM **Closing Dinner**
-at the Blue Rooster

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 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.

9:30-10:00 PM Depart for the Airport

10:00 PM Arrive at the airport

Friday, April 25

1:00 AM El Al #1 departs Tel Aviv for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno and Letsou

5:50 AM El Al #1 arrives JFK for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno and Letsou

8:55 AM Delta #5750 departs JFK for Letsou

9:50 AM Delta #5018 departs JFK for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno

10:22 AM Delta #5750 arrives DCA for Letsou

11:51 AM

Delta #5018 arrives Cleveland for Senator Moreno, Mrs. Moreno

JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA, CHAIRMAN
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE, VICE CHAIRMAN
JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO
DEB F. SCHER, NEBRASKA
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SHANNON HAMILTON KOPPLIN, CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR
WILLIAM B. CABLE, CHIEF CLERK

U.S. SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 220
SECOND AND CONSTITUTION AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6425
TELEPHONE: (202) 224-7461
FACSIMILE: (202) 224-7470

United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

April 9, 2025

Philip Letsou
Office of Senator Bernie F. Moreno
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Letsou:

This responds to your recent correspondence requesting approval from the Select Committee on Ethics (the Committee) to accept an invitation you received to travel to an educational seminar in Jerusalem, Golan Heights, and Herzliya, Israel, on April 20–25, 2025, sponsored by the American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF). Provided that you adhere to the guidance set forth below, it appears that it is permissible for you to accept necessary expenses from AIEF in connection with this trip.

Background

Based on your communication with the Committee, the background in this matter is as follows.¹ You are employed as the Chief of Staff for the Office of Senator Bernie F. Moreno. AIEF invited you to travel to an educational seminar in Jerusalem, Golan Heights, and Herzliya, Israel, on April 20–25, 2025. AIEF certified to the Committee that it will pay the necessary expenses² related to the travel and that it is neither a lobbyist, lobbying firm, agent of a foreign principal, or otherwise acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government. AIEF has also certified that it does not retain or employ a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal and that no registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal will accompany you at any point throughout your trip.³

Discussion

Privately sponsored travel includes any gift of travel and travel-related expenses for travel outside the Senate duty station, including transportation, lodging, food and refreshments, and conference fees and materials, whether paid for directly, reimbursed, or provided directly, from a private individual or entity, in connection with a Member's, officer's, or employee's official Senate duties. Incorporating reforms from the Honest Leadership and Open Government

¹ If this letter does not correctly recite the facts, contact the Committee immediately.

² The term "necessary expenses" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 10-13.

³ The term "any point throughout your trip" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 15.

Act of 2007 (HLOGA), Pub. L. 110-81 (2007), Senate Rule 35.2 permits Members, officers, and employees to accept privately sponsored travel only with the prior written approval of the Committee.

The Committee's approval process is governed by the *Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel (Travel Regulations)*. The *Travel Regulations* contain detailed requirements regarding who may sponsor travel; time limits for trips; and the type and amount of expenses that can be reimbursed.

Entities that do not retain or employ a lobbyist or foreign agent and all non-profit organizations designated as tax-exempt organizations under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, regardless of whether they retain or employ a lobbyist or foreign agent, may sponsor foreign trips for up to seven days. The seven-day limitation means seven 24-hour periods, calculated from the time of arrival in the trip location to the time of departure from the trip location. For such trips, neither lobbyists nor foreign agents may accompany a Senate invitee at any point throughout the trip, other than in a *de minimis* way.⁴ This means that neither lobbyists nor foreign agents may accompany Senate invitees at any point to and from the event, at the event itself, or at the location being visited.⁵

The Committee has determined that § 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations that are classified as private foundations, as opposed to public charities, may not pay for transportation from the United States to a foreign country.⁶ However, AIEF represented to the Committee that it is a § 501(c)(3) public charity, as opposed to a private foundation, pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.⁷

Under Senate Rule 35, Senate staff must receive advance authorization signed by the Member or officer under whose direct supervision the individual works in order to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary expenses related to fact-finding travel. Further, such authorization and expenses must be disclosed to the Secretary of the Senate by filing the completed *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* and the *Employee Post-Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses* (Form RE-1 and Form RE-2), along with a copy of the *Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form*, and all relevant attachments (e.g., the private sponsor's invitation and itinerary) **within 30 days of the conclusion of Privately Sponsored Travel**.

Consistent with these standards and Committee precedent, and AIEF's factual representations, it appears that it is permissible for you to accept necessary expenses from AIEF

⁴ The term "*de minimis*" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 6-8.

⁵ See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 6-10.

⁶ See 26 U.S.C. § 4941 et seq. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code broadly defines non-profit, charitable, tax-exempt organizations. These § 501(c)(3) organizations are then further defined or designated as "public charities" and "private foundations."

⁷ 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).

in connection with this trip, provided that the actual travel and travel-related expenses conform to the information and materials you provided, and the travel and all required documents are disclosed to the Secretary of the Senate (Office of Public Records).

Please be advised that the United States Constitution prohibits the acceptance of any gift, including a meal, from a foreign government without the consent of Congress. In the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), Congress consented to the acceptance by federal government officials of: (1) gifts of minimal value and (2) travel or the expenses for travel taking place entirely outside the United States, from a foreign government (which includes those acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government).⁸ The Senate has defined minimal value as \$100 or less. Further, pursuant to FGDA, there are certain reporting and procedural requirements that are imposed upon Members, officers, and employees who accept gifts from a foreign government. Please review the Committee's "Dear Colleague" letter of January 11, 2019, setting forth the items to be included in filing that report.

Finally, Senate Rule 34 requires a reporting individual,⁹ on their financial disclosure report, to make an annual disclosure of the receipt of payments or reimbursements under Senate Rule 35 from a private sponsor for officially-related travel expenses where, in the aggregate, travel expenses exceed \$480 from that sponsor during a calendar year. However, if a Member, officer, or employee properly reports the receipt of necessary expenses for such travel to the Secretary of the Senate within 30 days of the travel, as discussed above, the travel expenses need not be disclosed a second time on their financial disclosure report.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee.

Sincerely,



Shannon Hamilton Kopplin
Chief Counsel and Staff Director

Enclosure: Employee Privately Sponsored Travel Checklist

⁸ 5 U.S.C. § 7342.

⁹ A reporting individual is someone whose salary equals or exceeds 120% of the basic rate of pay for GS-15 (\$150,160 for CY 2025) or is a political fund designee and is required to file financial disclosure reports.