

H. Res. 38

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

November 8, 2005.

Whereas Israel has been trying to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since 2000, when it met the OECD's membership requirements relating to industrial and per-capita product criteria;

Whereas in March 2005, OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston stated that expanding the OECD's membership to include more countries is vital if the group is to remain a forum for discussing global economic policies;

Whereas in 2004, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and then Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu sent a joint letter to the foreign and finance ministers of the 30 member countries of the OECD, stating that Israel's involvement as a non-member country in the OECD's various committees is increasing, and that Israel meets the economic and institutional criteria required to join the OECD;

Whereas in October 2004, then Israeli Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu stated that joining the OECD was of strategic importance for repositioning Israel's economy from an emerging market to a developed one, adding that membership in the OECD would attract foreign investment;

Whereas in August 2004, the Israel Laboratory Accreditation Authority was invited to become a full member of the OECD Environment Policy Committee, the first committee that Israel has been invited to join as a full member;

Whereas Israel was asked to take part in the OECD's Insurance and Commerce Committees;

Whereas in March 2005, Israel was formally accepted as an observer on the OECD's Financial Statistics Committee, allowing experts from the Bank of Israel and Central Bureau of Statistics to participate in the committee's meetings;

Whereas the World Bank ranks Israel among the 25 countries in which it is easiest to do business;

Whereas Israel's tax burden, encompassing income and property taxes, customs duties, value-added taxes (VAT) and national insurance, is much lower than in most OECD member countries;

Whereas membership in the OECD could enhance Israel's status on the global market and within international financial institutions, lowering the risk factor on foreign loans to Israel;

Whereas Israel's economic and technological standing could potentially benefit OECD member countries in the science and technology, including high-technology, sectors;

Whereas in 2003, the World Economic Forum ranked Israel 20th out of 102 countries in its Growth Competitiveness Index, and the World Economic Forum's Technology Index ranked Israel 9th, before Canada (11th), Norway

(13th), Germany (14th), the United Kingdom (16th), and the Netherlands (18th); and

Whereas Israel is carrying out far reaching economic reforms based on the OECD's recommendations with respect to taxes, labor, competition, capital markets, pension funds, energy, infrastructures, communications, and transport: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) Israel shares the commitment to democratic
4 government and the market economy that is the
5 foundation of the Organisation for Economic Co-op-
6 eration and Development (OECD);

7 (2) Israel meets the OECD's membership re-
8 quirements and has been an active participant as a
9 non-member country in various OECD activities,
10 such as adherence to the OECD Declaration on
11 International Investment and Multinational Enter-
12 prises; and

13 (3) the United States Government should sup-
14 port and advocate the accession of Israel to the
15 OECD, including through coordination of efforts

- 1 with Mexico, Great Britain, and other countries sup-
- 2 portive of Israel's membership in the OECD.

Attest:

Clerk.