



**Office of
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For Immediate Release

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**Representative Kane Travels to Israel as Member of
Community Leaders Study Tour**

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah E. Kane (R-Shrewsbury) traveled to Israel on December 1st with 11 legislative colleagues as part of a Community Leaders Study Tour sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston.

“The knowledge and insight I gained into political, cultural, business, security, religious, social and societal challenges and opportunities that Israel and the Mid-East face was profound,” stated Representative Kane. “The quality, caliber and diversity of people we met with and the range of experiences provided enabled us to explore a very complicated land with a complex, ancient history while seeing firsthand the hard work of so many to bring real peace, economic development and educational opportunities to all.”

Representative Kane and her colleagues spent nine days in Israel, traveling extensively across the country, spending four nights in Jerusalem, one night in Haifa and three nights in Tel Aviv.

In Jerusalem Representative Kane met with several scholars who discussed the societal and economic realities of Israel, as well as the political landscape and parliamentary system. The group toured the Old City, including the Western Wall (Wailing Wall), the Old City Market, the Via Dolorosa and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as the history of the ancient city and its present role were outlined. The group met with administrators and parents at Yad B’Yad (the Hand in Hand) bilingual school where Jewish and Arab children learn together, which is an uncommon occurrence.

Focusing on the military and security issues, the group discussed ethics and dilemmas in the field with a Brigadier General and Vice Commander of an Armored Division in the Israel Defense Force (IDF). The study group toured the security zones established between Israel and the West Bank and discussed the ramifications with military members charged with their design, construction and oversight. While speaking to a colonel in the IDF who participated as an expert on territorial issues/mapping at the 2000 Camp David Peace Negotiations with President Clinton, Representative Kane stood on the same promenade overlooking Jerusalem where four IDF cadets were recently killed by a Palestinian terrorist in a truck-ramming attack.

To understand the dynamic economy of Israel, the group met with entrepreneurs being assisted with launching their innovative start-ups at the Jerusalem location of Massachusetts founded MassChallenge, opened in January 2016.

Representative Kane and her colleagues toured the Knesset, Israeli's parliament, and met with Dr. Aliza Lavie, a member of the Knesset representing the Yesh Atid party, focused on civic, socio-economic and governance issues. The group visited Yad Vashem, the Jewish National Memorial to the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, before spending time with four Jerusalem activists focused on bringing a better understanding of the many layers of complexity in Israeli society.

One of the highlights of the trip was traveling to the West Bank with Time Magazine and New York Times journalist Rami Nazzal. Mr. Nazzal, born in Palestine and educated in the United States, gave us first hand insight into the lives of Palestinians and the perception of those living in an unsettled condition, with little ability to influence their own leadership towards a long term solution. The group had coffee in "Stars and Bucks", a Ramallah coffee shop that Starbucks would not franchise, so the owner altered the business name and logo just enough not to be sued.

The group explored the life of Arab Israelis and met with Professor Dalia Fadila, President of the Technology and Science College of Baqa al Garbia. Dr. Fadila is the first Arab woman to be nominated president of an institution of higher education in Israel, and has devoted her life's work to educating the next generation with increased opportunity for Arab women and greater understanding of the challenges of Arabs living as a minority in a Jewish state.

The study tour also met with a unique network of local Palestinians and Israelis who have come to see each other as partners both needing to make changes in order to end the conflict plaguing their land. By building a grassroots model for co-existence through non-violent means, they work to affect larger change.

In Haifa, the group focused on public health and toured Rambam Health Care Center, a 1,000 bed academic, level one trauma center that has an underground parking garage for 1,500 cars that can shift to a 2,000 bed underground fully functioning hospital within 72 hours if security conditions warrant. From Haifa, the group traveled to the Golan Heights with stops on the borders of Lebanon and Syria while discussing the balance of power on Israel's northern borders and the conflict in Syria with Avi Melamed, a former Senior Advisor on Arab Affairs and a Fellow of Intelligence and Middle East Affairs for the Eisenhower Institute.

The last leg of the intensive journey was based out of Tel Aviv, where the group met with members of a secular Yeshiva, Senior Advisors to Tel Aviv's Mayor, and the founder of Yisrael Hofshit, a grassroots movement that strives for an Israeli society that practices cultural and religious pluralism, protects civil rights and upholds the principles of democracy. The study tour visited Rabin Square, named after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who was assassinated at the spot of his now memorial.

Traveling to the border with the Gaza Strip, the group visited Moshav Netiv Ha'asarrah, to discuss what it was like for the residents living and farming on the border of an area controlled

by terrorists who shot rockets at them numerous times daily for fourteen years without fail. Using binoculars, the group saw the terrorists training camps that are separated only by a security wall.

Jeremy Burton, Executive Director of Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, noted “The trip gave state officials an in-depth look into the political, security, and economic challenges and successes in Israeli society. It provided a wealth of opportunities to help participants understand the business and economic ties that bring Israel and Massachusetts together.”

“I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have attended this incredible journey,” stated Representative Kane.

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