



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Choose to Lead: 2018 AIPAC National Policy Conference Report

Register today for 2019. Be a part of the largest gathering of pro-Israel Americans.

In early March, we led the New Haven delegation to the AIPAC 2018 National Policy Conference in Washington DC. The conference numbers tell a powerful story:

- More than 18,000 activists from all 50 states.
- More than 600 speakers from the United States, Israel and around the world.
- More than 3,600 students from 675 campuses.
- Nearly 6,000 first-time attendees.
- Lobbying meetings in all 535 congressional offices.

But those numbers alone do not capture the power, the spirit, and the moving experience of joining 18,000 activists—American Jews and non-Jews, Democrats and Republicans, Men and Women, White, Black, Arab, Asian and Latino, Young and Old—all united by their love for Israel.

Words cannot express what we felt participating in twelve prolonged standing ovations in response to US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley’s address. “When I come to AIPAC, I am with friends. And at the UN, we don’t usually have very many friends.” She shared her own experiences of being bullied growing up as an Indian-American in the South and how that brought her to combat bullying of Israel in the UN. She referred to her response to Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erekat at the UN who told her to shut up, “I will always be respectful, but I will not shut up,” and vowed to continue combating anti-Israel de-legitimization at the UN. She also vigorously defended the decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. “It cannot be the case that only one country in the world doesn’t get to choose its capital city,” she said. She promised to be there when the new embassy opens in May.

Other highlights were Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales’s historic declaration that his country would be moving their embassy to Jerusalem this May as well. Prime Minister of Albania Ed Ram recounted his country’s history of being a refuge for Jews multiple times and spoke of his personal engagement in building a Jewish-Albania friendship cultural center in the heart of their capital city. Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle spoke about their support for the US-Israel relationship. We learned so much from the breakout sessions with leading Israeli and American experts, politicians and journalists. We heard about US-Israel cooperation in areas of defense, intelligence, homeland security, and cyber security, and Israel’s contributions to the world in areas of energy, water, agriculture, medicine, and more. At exhibits in the I-Village, we got to experience many

of the cutting-edge technologies and innovations developed in Israel. We touched an Iron Dome installation, saw an exhibit by Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design depicting the evolution of modern Israel’s art culture, and learned how clowns are an integral part of Israeli hospital medical teams just to name a few.



AIPAC’s New Haven Delegation, led by Reena & Arthur Seltzer after lobbying at Rep. Rose DeLauro’s office

You can watch highlights from the conference at watch.aipac.org/. But another highlight not captured on video is the empowering experience of lobbying our Congress about the importance of the US-Israel relationship. On the last day of the conference, we joined thousands of activists to make a difference on Capitol Hill to bolster Israel’s security, counter Iran, and protect Israel from boycotts, ensuring that all three pieces of legislation were each backed with strong bipartisan support.

For those of you visiting Israel this year with Rabbi Scolnic, we hope you will return with renewed zeal to continue your support for Israel by joining us at next year’s AIPAC Policy Conference, March 24 - 26, 2019 at the Washington Convention Center. For those of you unable to visit Israel this year, attending the conference is the next best thing to being there. If you register now, you receive a discounted price of \$200 off registration and it is fully refundable for cancellations made by January 18, 2019.

You have nothing to lose and a whole lot more to gain. We hope you will join us.

Am Yisrael Chai!

B’shalom,

Drs. Reena & Arthur Seltzer