

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Rules

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BILL: SR 8-C

INTRODUCER: Senator Berman

SUBJECT: Support for the State of Israel

DATE: November 2, 2023

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

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ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Twogood	Twogood	RC	<b>Favorable</b>

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**I. Summary:**

SR 8-C expresses support for the State of Israel and condemns the attacks and hateful actions by the Hamas terrorist group, as well as all persistent threats against Jewish people, institutions, and communities.

**II. Present Situation:**

**United States-Israel Relations**

After Israel's founding in 1948, the United States was the first country to recognize the State of Israel.<sup>1</sup> United States-Israel relations are characterized by support, cultural resonance, and cooperative mutual interests. The shared democratic values and religious affinities of the two countries have contributed to the bilateral ties.<sup>2</sup>

Israel's security concerns influence United States policy considerations regarding the Middle East, and the United States maintains an ongoing commitment to provide security assistance to Israel.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the United States' general expedition of aid and arms sales to Israel, a 10-year bilateral military aid memorandum of understanding commits the United States to provide Israel \$3.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing and to spend \$500 million annually on joint missile defense programs from fiscal year 2019 to fiscal year 2028.<sup>4</sup>

**Iran and Hamas**

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the governing body of the country of Iran. As a result of the Iranian takeover of the American Embassy on November 4, 1979, the United States and Iran

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, *U.S. Relations with Israel*, January 30, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-israel-2/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service report, *Israel: Background and U.S. Relations*, February 3, 2022, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44245/103> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

severed diplomatic relations in April 1980. Since then, the United States and Iran have had no formal diplomatic relationship.<sup>5</sup>

The United States has designated Iran a state sponsor of terrorism due to its repeated support for acts of international terrorism.<sup>6</sup> Regionally, Iran has supported acts of terrorism in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen through proxies and partner groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Globally, Iran has supported terrorist recruitment, financing, and plots across Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America.<sup>7</sup>

According to the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, Hamas is the largest and most capable militant group in the Palestinian territories and is committed to armed resistance against Israel and to the creation of an Islamic Palestinian State in Israel's place. Hamas has been the de facto governing body in the Gaza Strip since 2007<sup>8</sup> and is a designated foreign terrorist organization.<sup>9</sup> It receives funding, weapons, and training from Iran, as well as some funds that are raised in Gulf Arab countries.<sup>10</sup>

### **Recent Hamas Attacks on Israel**

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a surprise attack against Israel, shooting rockets and sending militants into a number of Israeli towns and cities.<sup>11</sup> During the attack, Hamas militants took over 200 hostages<sup>12</sup> and killed more than 1,400 civilians, including children and the elderly.<sup>13</sup> Reports indicate additional atrocities involving rape and torture.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, *U.S. Relations with Iran*, April 1, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-iran/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, *State Sponsors of Terrorism*, <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2021*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2021/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> National Counterterrorism Center, *Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Hamas*, [https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/hamas\\_fto.html](https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/hamas_fto.html) (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> The United States designates as "foreign terrorist organizations" foreign organizations that engage in terrorist activity that threatens the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (U.S. Dept. of State, *Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/> (last visited October 31, 2023)).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2021*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2021/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> The Washington Post, *Maps and videos show how the deadly surprise attack on Israel unfolded*, October 8, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/07/israel-gaza-timeline-videos-maps/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> The New York Times, *Israel's Attackers Took Over 200 Hostages. Here's What to Know About Them*, October 31, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-hostages-hamas-explained.html> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> The New York Times, *What We Know About the War Between Israel and Hamas*, October 31, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/israel-gaza-hamas-what-we-know.html> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>14</sup> Reuters, *Israeli forensic teams describe signs of torture, abuse*, October 15, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forensic-teams-describe-signs-torture-abuse-2023-10-15/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

Following the attack, Israel declared war, beginning air strikes and blocking supplies from entering Gaza.<sup>15</sup> The United States is providing military support to Israel in the ongoing conflict.<sup>16</sup>

### **Other Anti-Semitic Attacks**

The U.S. Department of State uses the following definition of antisemitism:

A certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.<sup>17</sup>

According to the most recent hate crimes report from the Office of the Attorney General, there were 148 reported hate crimes in Florida in 2021. The motivations for the hate crimes were:

- Race – 48 percent;
- Sexual orientation – 24.5 percent;
- Religion – 13.5 percent;
- Ethnicity – 7.4 percent;
- Homeless status – 2 percent; and
- Mental disability – 0.7 percent.<sup>18</sup>

Seventeen of the 20 religious hate crimes were committed against Jews.<sup>19</sup>

The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that anti-Jewish incidents comprised 51.4 percent of all religion-related incidents reported in 2022.<sup>20</sup> In addition, Florida's Jewish community has recently been the target of anti-Semitic and hate messages.<sup>21</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The resolution declares that the Senate:

- Condemns the unprovoked and barbaric attacks by Hamas against Israel, its citizens, and Americans.

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<sup>15</sup> CNN, *Israel is at war with Hamas. Here's what to know*, October 28, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/28/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-war-explained-week-3-mime-intl/index.html> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Dept. of Defense, *U.S. Military Continues Focus on Supporting Israel, Ukraine*, October 26, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3570670/us-military-continues-focus-on-supporting-israel-ukraine/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, *Defining Antisemitism*, <https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>18</sup> Office of the Attorney General, *Hate Crimes in Florida: January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021*, <https://www.myfloridalegal.com/files/pdf/page/BE0185D36969417B852589270066D783/Web+Link.pdf> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Dept. of Justice, *FBI Releases Supplement to the 2021 Hate Crime Statistics*, April 4, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/crs/highlights/2021-hate-crime-statistics> (last visited October 31, 2023).

<sup>21</sup> USA Today, *Florida lawmakers denounce anti-Semitic incidents over Labor Day weekend*, September 6, 2023, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/09/05/florida-disney-world-antisemitic/70772425007/> (last visited October 31, 2023).

- Unequivocally supports the right of the State of Israel to exist as a sovereign and independent nation.
- Supports the right of the State of Israel to defend itself and protect its citizens from indiscriminate violence and acts of terrorism.
- Demands the immediate end to any financial support, whether direct or indirect, of Hamas, the Iranian regime, Hezbollah, or any other entity that publicly supports these attacks and other terrorist activities.
- Rejects and condemns persistent threats against Jewish people, institutions, and communities in Florida, the United States, and abroad, including those from individuals and organizations committed to the extermination of the Jewish people.

The resolution specifies that a copy of the resolution shall be presented to each member of the Florida Delegation to the United States Congress and to the Ambassador of the State of Israel to the United States as a tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.

A Senate resolution is ceremonial in nature. It is an expression of the Senate as a body.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

None.

**IX. Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.