

**Testimony of The Honorable Laura A. Gillen (NY-04)**

**“FY 2026 Members’ Day Hearing”**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Subcommittee on Defense**

**February 25, 2025**

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, and Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I’m grateful for the work of Members of this Committee to provide the resources necessary to enhance our national security, strengthen our military, and shore up vital alliances around the world.

As you know, our ally Israel continues to face serious, wide-ranging threats from Iran and its terrorist proxies including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. I’m here today to urge you to continue Congress’ strong, bipartisan support for Israel’s safety and security by funding key U.S.-Israel defense cooperation programs in the upcoming Fiscal Year.

First, the horrific Hamas attacks on October 7 have shown the full scale of Hamas’ network of underground tunnels in Gaza. Hamas has built an estimated 350 to 450 miles of tunnels, with nearly 5,700 separate shafts leading into them. In addition, since 2006, Hezbollah has further expanded its deep network of tunnels along Israel’s northern border with Lebanon, allowing the group to continue smuggle weapons and launch attacks against Israel. I respectfully request that

this committee provide \$80 million in funding for U.S.-Israel Anti-Tunnel Cooperation in FY26 to help detect and destroy these tunnels.

Second, in recent years we've seen Iran and its proxies deploy lethal, explosive-laden drones against Israel and other allies. These drones have also been used in hundreds of attacks against American troops stationed at military bases in the region. We need to develop the most advanced counter-drone technology to neutralize these threats. This technology can also help us here at home to counter small drones flying over our civilian airports and critical infrastructure. That is why I urge the committee to provide increased funding of \$75 million for U.S.-Israel Counter UAS Cooperation.

Third, we cannot afford to allow adversaries like Russia, China, and Iran to dominate the next generation of battlefield technologies. Israel is a technological powerhouse, and by working together our two countries can remain at the forefront of key areas in the future of warfare, including AI, cybersecurity, robotics, and many others. That is why I respectfully request that this Committee provide \$47.5 million in funding for U.S.-Israel Emerging Technology Cooperation to invest in these critical capabilities.

Finally, I urge the Committee to continue to provide full \$500 million in missile defense funding, an important part of the \$3.8 billion in annual security assistance we provide for Israel. This funding for Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow 3, helps Israel defend itself and save innocent lives, as we saw last April when Iran launched a barrage of rocket and missile attacks against Israel.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for your time today, and your work on this Committee. I look forward to working with you and all our colleagues -- on a bipartisan basis -- to strengthen our national security and support the U.S.-Israel relationship.