

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2019

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

As Members of the House of Representatives who are committed to the U.S.-Israel relationship, we write to urge you to use your authorities under 21 USC §2242 to establish a regional office of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the State of Israel. As a global leader in innovation, Israel's world class medical research programs have spurred breakthrough developments in medical technologies, pharmaceuticals, and other advancements in medicine that have positively impacted the global health system. We believe establishing an FDA office in Israel would facilitate collaboration in life-saving research and is a natural step for strengthening the special relationship between our countries.

As you know, products regulated by the FDA come from more than 300,000 facilities in more than 150 countries. As the FDA continues its important work of ensuring product integrity to protect U.S. consumers, the ever-increasing volume of imported products continues to pose new challenges for regulators. The FDA has sought to overcome these challenges by establishing and operating foreign posts across the globe, which, facilitate proactive and consistent engagement with stakeholders and help officials make the best-informed decisions when determining if products may enter the United States. The FDA already operates 13 regional offices across the globe, in China, India, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Belgium, Italy, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Jordan, prioritizing relationship building, information sharing, technical cooperation and capacity-building, and interagency cooperation.

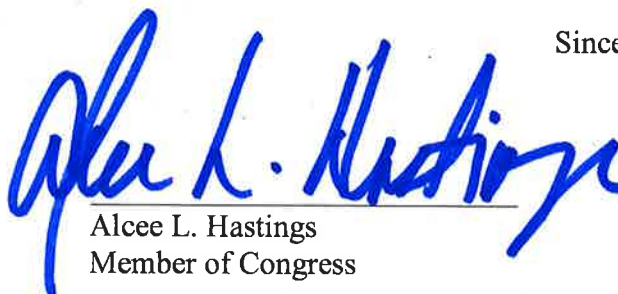
As a strategic ally, Israel is already one of the United States' larger trading partners, with more than \$35 billion in goods exchanged last year alone. Some of Israel's largest exports to the United States are pharmaceuticals and medical instruments, which accounted for approximately \$5.3 billion in 2018. Agricultural exports total an additional \$400 million annually. We believe placing a regional FDA office in Israel would build on this mutually beneficial cooperation by improving avenues for communication between researchers and regulators and shortening the application process for Israeli companies interested in exporting these goods to the United States. The House of Representatives unanimously passed H.R.1837, the *United States-Israel Cooperation Enhancement and Regional Security Act* in July 2019, which included language supporting collaboration with Israel through the FDA's Office of International Programs.

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently announced several initiatives and research findings that further underscore the benefits of facilitating new cooperation under the FDA. In October, the Weizmann Institute of Science, a leading institution for

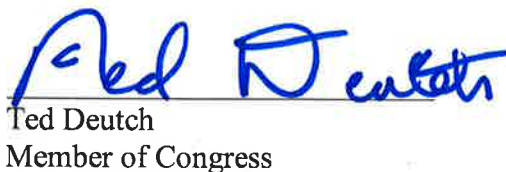
interdisciplinary research, announced that its researchers had found a new method for preventing the spread of Ewing sarcoma Bone Cancer in children, while the Ministry of Agriculture announced in August that it would invest approximately \$17 million in a new National Genome Editing Center to research and develop more resilient agricultural food products. In 2017, Israeli researchers identified a synthetic compound capable of preventing cancer cells from metastasizing, performed the world's first bone implants utilizing lab-grown bones, and developed an artificial cornea implant that may one day allow millions of people living with visual impairments the ability to see. As this valuable research continues, the presence of an FDA office in Israel will undoubtedly facilitate closer cooperation between Israel's Ministry of Health and the FDA.

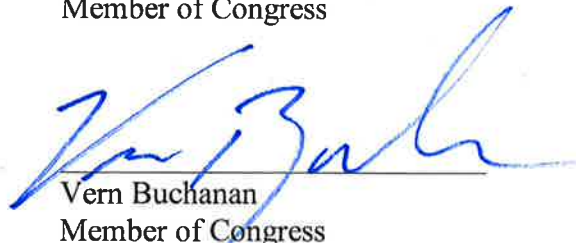
As cooperation between Israel and the United States continues to reach historic levels, we believe that establishing a regional office of the FDA in Israel would be highly beneficial for both Americans and Israelis alike. We respectfully request that you give our request full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable rules and regulations, and ask to be kept apprised of any decisions in this regard. With warm regards, we remain,

Sincerely,

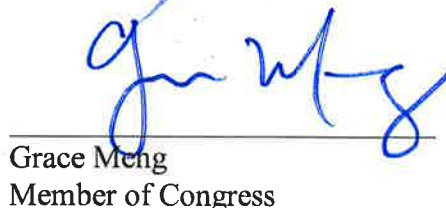

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

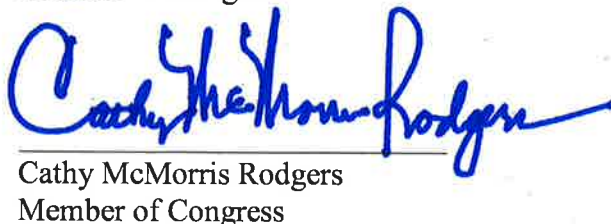

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

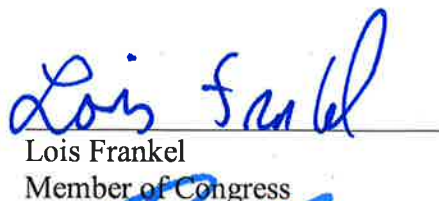

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress


Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

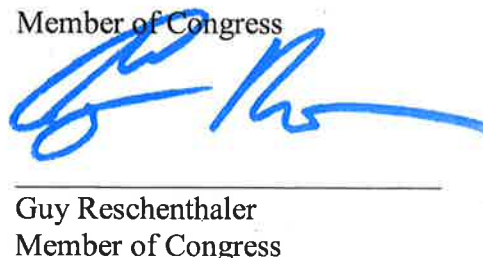

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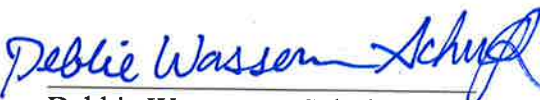

Mike Waltz
Member of Congress

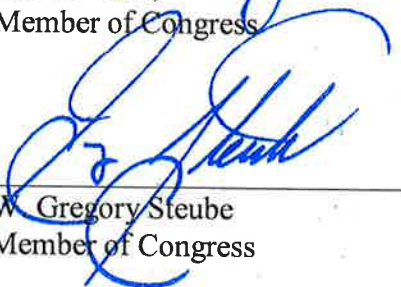

Frederica S. Wilson
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Lee Zeldin
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Ted S. Yoho, DVM
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress


Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

- Cc: Hon. ADM Brett P. Giroir, M.D., Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs
Hon. Steven Mnuchin, Secretary, United States Department of the Treasury
Hon. Mike Pompeo, Secretary, United States Department of State
Robert Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative
H.E. David M. Friedman, United States Ambassador to the State of Israel
H.E. Ron Dermer, Ambassador of Israel to the United States