



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Kionne McGhee & Representative Scott Plakon

District 117

Representative Kionne McGhee:

10720 Caribbean Boulevard, Suite 435

Cutler Bay, FL 33189-1218

(305) 256-6301

KionneMcGhee@MyFloridaHouse.Gov

District 29

Representative Scott Plakon:

1855 West 434, Suite 222

Longwood, FL 32750-5071

(407) 262-7423

Scott.Plakon@MyFloridaHouse.Gov

FLORIDA HB 1135 – MCGHEE AND PLAKON CO-SPONSORED LEGISLATION OFFERING “FLORIDA STANDS WITH ISRAEL” AUTOMOTIVE TAG

Governor DeSantis signs bill on eve of Jewish New Year Holiday

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA - On Friday, September 18, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed HB 1135, authorizing the creation of a “Florida Stands with Israel” specialty auto tag. The Governor’s signing took place on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah. HB 1135 enjoyed bipartisan sponsorship and passed through both the Florida House and Senate unanimously.

The “Florida Stands with Israel” auto tag included in HB 1135 was originally submitted to the House in a separate bill co-sponsored by Florida House Minority Leader Kionne L. McGhee (D) and Representative Scott Plakon (R).

Reps. McGhee and Plakon issued a joint statement:

“In a session like never before, this was a bright spot for our legislative efforts. It was inspiring to see both chambers of the Florida Legislature come together in a bipartisan manner to unanimously pass HB 1135. This shows that our relationship with the State of Israel touches upon many of Florida’s most vital interests, values, and ideals. Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of Floridians support this special relationship and now have a wonderful way to celebrate it. We wish to thank all of our co-sponsoring legislative colleagues, as well as the many citizens who weighed in with their approval.”

Rep. Scott Plakon stated separately in his 2020 Rosh Hashanah greeting:

I would like to particularly thank the Israeli-American community for their vocal support of this effort. I timed the filing of these bills in December to coincide with a gathering of thousands of Israeli Americans from around the country in Hollywood, FL. In particular, I also want to express my appreciation to my longtime friend Joseph Sabag, the Israeli-American Council for Action Executive Director, for his policy guidance and expertise throughout this process. I cannot think of a sweeter way to wish Florida’s Jewish community a *Shana Tova* - Happy New Year!”

Details:

The design of the specialty license plate will be decided by a free 30-day contest open to submissions by the general public. The contest will be sponsored by the Israeli-American Council (IAC) and coordinated by co-sponsor organization [Artists 4 Israel](#). The panel of judges will consist of the lead legislative sponsors of the bill



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– Sen. Aaron Bean, Sen. Lauren Book, Rep. JW Grant, Rep. Kionne McGhee and Rep. Scott Plakon – joined by Bal Harbour Mayor and community leader Gabe Groisman.

After the final design is submitted and approved by the Florida Department of Transportation the IAC will lead a public marketing campaign, along with the co-sponsorship of IAC for Action and our local community partners to drive the necessary 3,000 pre-sales needed to authorize production.

A portion of the revenue generated by sales of the new specialty license plate will benefit [Hatzalah of Miami-Dade, Inc.](#), a non-profit that deploys community-based paramedics to slash emergency response times and increase survival rates.

Background:

Over 120,000 Israeli Americans call Florida home. This community is at the center of the Florida-Israel relationship and contributes heavily to the wellbeing of the state through its economic productivity, innovation, philanthropy, and focus on community care. The Florida-Israel relationship is non-partisan and enjoys support from both Democrats and Republicans.

Florida has many key cooperative agreements with Israel. Governor DeSantis recently signed an updated version of the 2013 Florida-Israel Memorandum of Understanding, which promotes collaborative research, development and commercialization of projects related to space development and life-science projects. Florida's exports to Israel since 1996 total over \$4.5 billion. Exports in 2018 were \$400 million.

Recent data shows that since the legislature's passage of a 2016 law defending its businesses from anti-Israel commercial boycotts, trade with Israel has increased by over 30 percent. Florida-based businesses, which are responsible for thousands of jobs, depend upon this commercial trade.