

Steinberg, director of Project LEARN, Agudath Israel's special-education-advocacy office, for her work in this area. Mrs. Steinberg said, "I would like to note the devotion of Senator Flanagan. Throughout the years that we've worked together, he really listened as if it were his children sitting there. Thank you, Senator, for all of your help for our children."

Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, Agudath Israel's vice president for community services, said that the struggle to represent and support nonpublic schools has recently become much more difficult, and there are now legislators who seem determined to cut all funding to non-public schools. In such a climate, Rabbi Lefkowitz said, good friends like Majority Leader Flanagan are even more precious. He presented a plaque to Majority Leader Flanagan for his work on behalf of the yeshiva community.

In his speech, Mr. Flanagan called for the continued collaboration of Agudath Israel and the Jewish community with himself and other legislators, and urged the community to get everyone to go out and vote.

Chaskel Bennett, member of Agudath Israel's board of trustees, said, "It is rare in politics to forge a relationship with someone who fearlessly fights for the causes and people they believe in, no matter the political costs. First as education committee chairman and now as leader, John Flanagan has been our friend and ally showing a tenacity and loyalty rare in politics. Activists deep in the trenches truly understand just how precious it is to have legislative lead-

ers who place a premium on principles and friendship . . . It is important to remember and thank those who really stand with you, especially when things get tough. Today we had the opportunity to thank the Leader and his colleagues in the Senate for their sensitivity and determination in protecting and defending the issues vitally important to our faith-based community."

Another politically active member of Agudath Israel's board of trustees, Leon Goldenberg, said, "this was a historic gathering, bringing together top leaders of New York's yeshiva community, representing tens of thousands of children and their families, with the person who has done so much for our yeshivas and day schools in the New York State Legislature. Thank you, Agudath Israel, for making this happen.

The evening might best be summed up in Senator Flanagan's own words: "I believe that what you've done for me today is a terrific *mitzvah*." ❖

Anti-BDS Delegation To Gather On Capitol Hill

By Julie Ahn and Hannah Levin

After months of advocacy, a delegation of American Jewish communal and business leaders who comprise the United States-Israel Security Alliance, an initiative dedicated to strengthening the U.S.-Israeli relationship, are set to convene on Capitol Hill on Thursday, **September 22**, to urge leading and influential members of both the Senate and the House to support legislation to combat the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) anti-Israel movement and



Ezra Friedlander and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin

thank those that have sponsored legislation to this effect.

In the guise of promoting human rights and equality, the BDS movement seeks to delegitimize Israel by calling on the international community to implement boycott and divestment initiatives against corporations which profit from business in Israel, essentially suffocating the state of Israel economically. A political, economic, cultural, and ideological global campaign, the BDS movement has become a giant that vigorously attempts to denigrate Israel by falsely stigmatizing the Jewish state as a 21st-century apartheid regime.

This mission comes at a critical time, when the BDS movement has been

increasing economic and political pressure to force Israel to submit to its demands. Goals include boycotts and divestment from certain Israeli products, as well as resolutions for universities to divest from Israeli companies. The anti-Israel BDS sentiment is also seeping into corporate boardrooms and trade unions, with a growing trend in Europe to ban or label products made in Israeli factories over the green line. Due to this movement, there have been disruptions of Israeli cultural events, pressure to cancel events with cultural figures in Israel, as well as strong efforts to gain support for BDS from important

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POLITICAL ROUNDUP

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religious institutions. The BDS movement, while claiming peace, will not stop until Israel is on her knees.

In 2015, President Obama signed into law the Trade Promotion Authority Act, which included an amendment to "discourage actions by potential trading partners that discourage commercial activity solely between the United States and Israel." This amendment incorporated language from the United States-Israel Trade and Commercial Enhancement Act sponsored by Representatives Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA). A similar bill, known as the United States-Israel Trade Enhancement Act of 2015, was sponsored in the Senate by Senators Cardin and Portman. The Combating BDS Act of 2016, an additional legislative effort to combat BDS, was introduced on February 10, 2016 by Senators Kirk and Manchin in the Senate, and Representatives Robert Dold (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA) in the House.

The delegation and its co-chairs Ken Abramowitz, Mark Meyer Appel, Andrew Friedman, Esq., Nathan Herzog, Dr. Alan Kadish, Joseph B. Stamm, and Stanley Treitel expect to be meeting with these members as well as many others.

Recently, the New Jersey and California (pending Governor Brown's signature) have passed legislation mandating state divestment from companies that boycott Israel. Other states, including New York, issued similar policies. In all, about half of the state legislatures

are considering or have adopted resolutions which condemn boycotts against Israel or defund universities that participate in such boycotts.

The delegation will convey appreciation to members of Congress for preventing politically motivated sanctions against Israel and protecting the right of both state and local governments to disassociate contracts from entities that engage in boycotting Israel, and will encourage further legislative efforts both on the federal and state level.

Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group, who is organizing the mission, summed up the objective of the mission by stating, "By introducing and supporting anti-BDS legislation, members of Congress are continuing their legislative efforts to thwart the BDS movement, standing against the radical campaign to cripple Israel socially, economically, politically, and ideologically. Legislative efforts to support the anti-BDS campaign send a message against groups that force radical agendas in the name of peace." ❖

Weprin Introduces Assembly Resolution Calling For Release Of Israeli Hostages

Assemblyman David Weprin joined the parents of fallen Israeli soldier Hadar Goldin, a'h, Dr. Leah and Dr. Simcha Goldin, the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY), and elected officials to call for the immediate and unconditional release of fallen Israeli soldiers Hadar Goldin



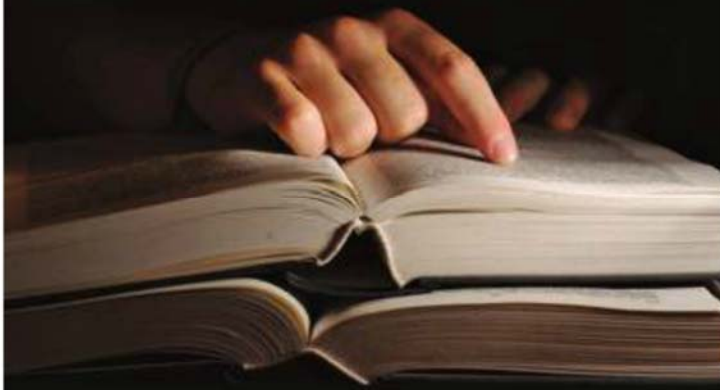
Assemblyman David Weprin announcing the NYS Assembly resolution calling for the release of Israeli civilians Avera Mengistu and Hisham Al-Sayed and the bodies of Israeli soldiers Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul

and Oron Shaul and the safe return of Israeli civilians Abraham Mengistu and Hisham Al-Sayed, all of whom are being held hostage by Hamas. At the press conference, Assemblyman David Weprin announced the introduction of an NYS Assembly resolution calling for the aforementioned on humanitarian grounds.

"Rather than make a basic humanitarian gesture by returning the bodies to the families and releasing those who have been unjustly captured, Hamas uses the deceased and the lives

of the disabled as pawns to extract concessions from the state of Israel," said Assemblyman David Weprin. "This is why I am introducing a resolution in the New York State Assembly demanding that Hamas immediately and unconditionally release Avera Mengistu and Hisham Al-Sayed, and the remains of Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin. We must stand as a community united against this type of evil, abroad and right here in New York, and I look forward to the passage of our resolution in New York State." ❖

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