

Ohio May Become First State in US to Recognize Jerusalem as Israel's True Capital

This past weekend Sar Shalom Center hosted a "Stand with Israel" assembly sponsored by the Richland Community Prayer Network and the Israeli Leadership Institute (ILI). The gathering celebrated the 70th anniversary of the rebirth of Israel and raised funds to support the ILI based in Sderot, Israel.

Israeli Leadership Institute Founder & President Mr. Eeki Elner told the two hundred attendees: "I travel extensively throughout the States, and I have never seen anyone like Ohio, more specifically, north central Ohio, who loves Israel more."

Recent examples of the strong friendship between the area and the Jewish state include a clergy letter sent by leading clergymen from over one hundred local congregations to Prime Minister Netanyahu supporting Israel's sovereignty and the acquisition of Israeli bonds by Richland County initiated by the clergy.

Additionally, area religious leaders publicly showed strong support of the United States moving its embassy to Jerusalem. Recent local efforts have also led to consideration by the Ohio Legislature to make Ohio the first state to recognize Jerusalem as capital of Israel.

Guest speaker for the event was the Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, Mr. Hilik Bar.

According to the deputy speaker, "Ohio is truly the greatest friend to Israel in the United States, no doubt about it. Ohio is an emerging force in support of Israel's future."

Bar credits the Bible for giving the nation of Israel the spark of hope it needed to pursue its rebirth after two thousand years of being in exile. When Israel announced the establishment of the new Jewish state in 1948, it was attacked by seven neighboring Arab nations but defeated the coalition despite a small military where only half of the troops had guns.

As second in charge of the 120-member Israeli parliament, Bar meets with many diplomats across the Middle East and says he asks Israel's enemies one question: "Do you want to live in the Middle East next to us or instead of us? Because if you want to live in the Middle East next to us, the nation of Israel has an obligation to find a route to have peace with you. But if you want to live in the Middle East instead of us, Israel will take every measure to protect its people."

The day before arriving in Ohio, the deputy speaker was in Guatemala, speaking to 500 clergy.

Nine clergy, along with County Commissioners Darrell Banks and Marilyn John, Judge Ron Spon, Magistrate Andrea Clark, School Board Member Martin Gottschling, retired Judge James DeWeese and retired State Senator Dick Schafrath attended the commemoration.

"On behalf of the Knesset, I want to thank you for having this celebration to support Israel and thank you for demonstrating your love and your commitment to the nation of Israel," said Bar. "I am honored to call you my friends."