

32 Ohio Clergy Proclaim Support Through Israeli Bond Investment

Thirty-two Ohio clergy have banded together to proclaim their support of Israel in a recent letter sent to Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The state of Ohio has invested in Israel bonds since 1993, making it known as the largest state holder of Israel bonds in the United States.

In October, nine more counties invested for the first time in Israel bonds, bringing the total number of counties in Ohio investing from six to 15 in a single month, adding \$ million in county investments in Israel bonds.

The letter from the pastors was copied to Knesset speaker Yariv Levin, U.S. Ambassador David Friedman and U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo.

The letter states:

“First and foremost, as clergy from multiple denominations across the Buckeye Bible Belt, we want to express our profound regret regarding a 2017 World Council of Churches’ (WCC) policy. This policy calls Israel’s sovereignty of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria ‘illegal’ and the expansion of its construction and settlements as ‘illegal and unjust.’ This same policy states its support of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) Movement in Jewish settlements of these listed areas.

“We want to assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, the World Council of Churches does not represent our local congregations, nor does its unorthodox view on Israel carry any authority.”

The letter highlights the Ohio clergy’s efforts to support the

American government's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital as well as Israeli's sovereignty of the Golan Heights, Judea and Samaria.

The pastors expressed their "support for Israel" and sought to share their "approval of the construction and expansion of Jewish settlements in its sovereign territories."

"We are very appreciative of the personal support shown by this group of Christian clergy to Israel and the Israel Bonds program," Jay Schottenstein, chairman of Central Ohio Israel Bonds, wrote in a statement emailed to the Cleveland and Columbus *Jewish News*.

In their closing remarks, the 32 faith leaders shared their heartfelt appreciation for the strength in the partnership between Ohio and Israel, saying, "Together we are combating anti-Semitism and building a brighter future."