

## **The Importance of Iron Dome and H.R. 5323**

September 22, 2021

**Iron Dome, an anti-missile defense system co-developed by the U.S. and Israel, is used to protect all Israelis — Jewish and Arab alike — from missile attacks against them. H.R. 5323 would replenish critical Iron Dome batteries, depleted after the rocket barrage launched by Hamas last May. Passage of this measure is vital for the safety of all Israelis as well as for stability in the region.**

- During the 11-day May conflict between Israel and Hamas, Iron Dome saved at least tens of thousands of civilian lives by preventing the majority of the 4,000+ rockets fired by Hamas at Israeli citizens from landing on Israeli schools, parks, hospitals, and more.
- Since Israel voluntarily withdrew all of its soldiers and settlements from Gaza in 2005, some 17,000 rockets have been fired at Israel from Gaza — including more than 4,000 during the May conflict.
- Passing this funding for Iron Dome makes the chances of full-scale war less likely. Denying Israel the resources to purchase missile defense systems to protect civilians from rocket attacks could lead to more casualties and greater escalation in future conflicts. It would also incentivize Hamas to continue targeting civilian population centers.
- Those who choose to vote against the replenishment of a purely self-defensive system do so knowing it could only lead to more deaths.

**The bottom line is that voting against Iron Dome funding will have the unintended — but perverse — consequence of more Palestinian and Israeli civilian deaths. It's also a break with the solemn commitments made by President Obama, President Biden, and Congressional Democrats.**

**Democrats have a proud tradition of support for Iron Dome and, more broadly, Israel's security.**

- U.S. military assistance to Israel is codified in the Memorandum of Understanding negotiated and signed by the Obama-Biden administration. That assistance helps fund the Iron Dome missile defense system.
- Every Democratic Member of the House of Representatives at the time voted to make the terms of this MOU law.

- After the May conflict, President Biden committed to supporting Israel's right to defend itself and promised to help replenish Israel's Iron Dome defense system: He said, "The United States fully supports Israel's right to defend itself against indiscriminate rocket attacks from Hamas and other Gaza based terrorist groups that have taken the lives of innocent civilians in Israel. ...I assured [the Prime Minister] of my full support to replenish Israel's Iron Dome system to ensure its defenses and security in the future."

**To vote against Iron Dome funding now is morally wrong, counterproductive to the desired ends, bad policy and bad politics.**

**We urge every Democrat to vote in favor of H.R. 5323 and support this entirely defensive and life-saving system.**