

Legislation Text

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Supporting United States Senate Resolution 185 and United State House Resolution 268 - Reaffirming the Commitment of the United States to a Negotiated Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia expresses its strong support of United States Senate Resolution 185, and United States House Resolution 268 (S.E. 185 and H.R. 268), each of which reaffirms the commitment of the United States to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. They also reaffirms opposition to the inclusion of Hamas in a united government unless it is willing to accept peace with Israel and renounce violence and, further, it declares that they declare Congress' opposition to Palestinian efforts to gain recognition as a state through the United Nations or otherwise outside direct negotiations demonstrates absence of a good faith commitment to peace negotiations, and , and declare that such recognition will have implications for continued United States aid and diplomatic support; and

WHEREAS, The policy of the United States since 2002 has been to support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and

WHEREAS, A true and lasting peace between the people of Israel and the Palestinians can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties. This was the feeling of Palestine Liberation Organization Chair Yassir Arafat, who wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on September 9, 1993, stating that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations; and

WHEREAS, The reconciliation agreement signed by Fatah and Hamas on May 4, 2011 was reached without Hamas being required to renounce violence, accept Israel's right to exist, and accept prior agreements made by the Palestinians (the Quartet conditions). Hamas, an organization responsible for the death of more than 500 innocent civilians, including two dozen United States citizens, has been designated by the United States Government as a foreign terrorist organization and a specially designated terrorist organization. It has violated international norms since 2006, when it kidnapped and held captive Israeli sergeant Gilad Shalit, and it continues to forcefully reject the possibility of negotiations or peace with Israel. By contrast, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accepted expressed his acceptance of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and his willingness to negotiate with the Palestinians, without preconditions; and

WHEREAS, S.R. 185 and H.R. 268 express Congress' support the position of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that the United States "will not deal with or in any way fund a Palestinian government that includes Hamas unless and until Hamas has renounced violence, recognized Israel and agreed to follow the previous obligations of the Palestinian Authority." The United States has also vetoed, under two Presidents, 11 United Nations Security Council resolutions related to this conflict and our Permanent Representative to that organization has stated that it is "unwise" for the United Nations to attempt to resolve key issues between the Israelis and Palestinians; and

WHEREAS, S.R.185 and H.R. 268 both reaffirm Congress' "strong support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resulting in two states: a democratic, Jewish state of Israel and a viable, democratic, Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition." They state Congress' "firm

belief that any Palestinian unity government must publicly and formally forswear terrorism, accept Israel's right to exist, and reaffirm previous agreements made with the state of Israel." They also reiterate Congress' "strong opposition to any attempt to establish or seek recognition of a Palestinian state outside of an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians," and Congress' support of the President's opposition to a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state; now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby express the strong support of this legislative body for United States Senate Resolution 185 and United States House Resolution 268. We acknowledge the bipartisan and overwhelming support that both of these Resolutions received from members of Congress, including those representing the people of the City of Philadelphia. We also express our strong support for United States governmental actions that discourage both Israelis and Palestinians from pursuing unilateral steps that undermine negotiations between them. It is our hope that this strong message by the United States Congress and other legislative bodies around the nation will help bring about the peace so desperately needed in this region.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to Ambassador Susan E. Rice, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, for inclusion in the official record.