

Jewish brethren in the State of Israel to taste freedom and freely practice their faith. The State of Israel aside from being a thriving metropolis with a vibrant economy has become the central location for the study of Judaism and its holy texts.

Since its inception Israel has been fighting a war of terrorism perpetuated against it. I have been pleased throughout my tenure in Congress to stand strongly with the State of Israel in their struggle against terrorism and will continue to do so. We must recognize our allies in the Middle East. Israel has continuously stood with the United States and our interests and I hope that our close relationship will continue to be strengthened as we work to promote our shared values.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding leadership of The Consul General in New York, Arye Mekel, for his dedication to bridging the communities of Israel and New York. Additionally, the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York has worked tirelessly to advocate on the behalf of the State of Israel and the New York Jewish Community and I would like to thank them for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues here today in congratulating the State of Israel on their Independence and look forward to the alliance between our two countries to continue to grow.

OFFERING CONGRATULATIONS TO  
THE STATE OF ISRAEL ON ITS  
57TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDE-  
PENDENCE

**HON. TIM HOLDEN**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 12, 2005*

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the people of the State of Israel on the celebration of the 57th anniversary of its founding. Known in Hebrew as Yom Ha'atzmaut, this special day marks the historic date in 1948 on which the British Mandate over Palestine expired and the State of Israel was proclaimed.

Each year, this celebration comes on the heels of Yom Ha'zikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, when the nation expresses its eternal debt and gratitude to the more than 20,000 soldiers who gave their lives to secure the country's independence and defend its continued existence.

Israel and the United States have shared a special bond since the founding of the modern Jewish State in 1948. The United States was the first country to recognize Israel, only 11 minutes after it was officially created. Since then, our two countries have developed a rock-solid friendship that does not depend on the parties in power either in Washington or Jerusalem. Over the past half-century, bipartisan support for Israel has been a staple of every Congress regardless of which party is in the majority and which in the minority.

Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, a region dominated by authoritarian and military regimes. Our two nations share the fundamental principles of freedom and equality. Both were established by immigrants, who sought freedom from oppression. Both stand as symbols of liberty and pluralism in a world

still marked by authoritarianism and intolerance. Both have provided safe havens for oppressed people from all parts of the globe and both are rooted in the unshakable tenets of democracy, human dignity, individual rights, and religious freedom.

Once again Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer my sincere congratulations to the people of Israel on this joyous occasion.

ISRAEL'S 57TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
INDEPENDENCE

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 12, 2005*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON. Mr. Speaker, it is a special privilege for me today to honor the nation of Israel on its 57th birthday. On May 14, 1948—the fifth day of Iyar, 5708 under the Jewish calendar—after years without a national homeland, the Jewish people established a new country. As Israelis celebrate their country's 57th anniversary, the international community is celebrating with them 50 years of independence.

In the 30th Congressional District of Texas, the Dallas Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Dallas, DFW International, Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas & the Rabbinic Association of Greater Dallas and other organizations have scheduled a series of events to commemorate this occasion.

As someone with a great interest in Israel, Middle Eastern affairs and world peace, I believe that the political transformations in this region during the past few years have been dramatic. We have come a long way, despite attempts by extreme factions to harm Israel and the cause of peace in the region.

I would like to quote an excerpt from Israel's 'declaration of independence,' published 57 years ago as the British mandate over the area drew to an end: 'We extend our hand in peace and neighborliness to all the neighboring states and their peoples, and invite them to cooperate with the independent Jewish nation for the common good of all.'

It is in that spirit, and with that faith, that I will continue to work with the administration to ensure the United States remains firm in its commitment to the security of Israel and to those principles necessary to guarantee the success of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

**HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 12, 2005*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, today marks Israel Independence Day, the 57th anniversary of the founding of Israel. This is a time to recognize a strong, stable, and democratic nation, as well as a loyal ally. The fact that Israel is a thriving country carries significant meaning not only in the Middle East, but also throughout the world. In a short time, Israel has established itself as a rich cultural destination and a center for Jewish beliefs and practices. This is largely because the people of Israel have been car-

rying on their traditions for thousands of years. In spite of its enemies, Israel has continued to grow, inspiring democracy and independence in the region.

When I first visited Israel, I immediately noticed the resilience that showed itself in so many ways. Despite the nearly constant danger, Israelis go about their daily lives without fear. Shopkeepers kept their businesses running, even after their storefronts had been destroyed by terrorist bombings. Worshipers maintained their schedule of religious services, defiant to any threats to their safety. Students packed classrooms during the day, eager to learn about Israel's history. They made it a point to get out and experience that freedom, not letting any scare tactics ruin their lives or dash their hopes for peace. We could all take a lesson from their enthusiasm, their zest for life, and their courage.

Israel continues to serve as a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. The Israeli people have an unrivaled appreciation for their freedoms. You can see it in the public displays of their strong Jewish faith. You will hear it as you walk down the streets, vibrant with markets, artisans, and music. You know it by their involvement in the political process, with each vote regarded as a privilege that their leaders must earn. Their patriotism is evident, and not just on Israel Independence Day, but during the entire year.

For this year's celebration, I want to commend Israel for standing strong in the face of opposition. While there is a lot of work to be done to foster lasting peace in the region, they have much to be proud of. The United States must maintain its support of Israel, especially at this crucial time in history. We have a real chance not only to aid Israel in establishing peace within its own borders, but also to help them set an example of democracy for other countries. It is certain that Israel will have many more Independence Days to look forward to in the future.

HONORING THE 57TH ANNIVER-  
SARY OF ISRAEL'S INDEPEND-  
ENCE

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 12, 2005*

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the people of Israel in celebrating the 57th Anniversary of Israel's Independence.

As Israel's Declaration of Independence states, "The land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people" and on May 14, 1948, the land of their ancestors was returned to the Jewish people.

Shortly after Israel declared its independence, President Harry Truman began what has led to a strong partnership between our two countries by recognizing the provisional Jewish government as de facto authority of the new Jewish state.

Today, 57 years after declaring its independence, Israel and the United States continue to share the common values and ideals of advancing democracy and promoting human rights around the globe. As our strongest ally in fighting terrorism, Israel, a country which has had to fight against terrorism and attacks from its neighbors for its entire existence, continues to play a vital role in promoting American interests.