118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION  

S. ______

To expand and strengthen the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Menendez (for himself, Mr. Risch, Ms. Rosen, Ms. Ernst, Mr. Booker, and Mr. Lankford) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on ______

A BILL

To expand and strengthen the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum, and for other purposes.

1  Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2  tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3  SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

4  (a) Short Title.—This Act may be cited as the
5  “Regional Integration and Normalization Act of 2023” or
6  “RINA”.

7  (b) Table of Contents.—The table of contents for

8  this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definitions.
Sec. 3. Findings.
Sec. 4. Sense of Congress.
2

Sec. 5. Statement of policy.
Sec. 6. United States Special Presidential Envoy for the Abraham Accords, Negev Forum, and Related Normalization Agreements.
Sec. 7. Enhanced reporting requirements under the Israel Relations Normalization Act.
Sec. 8. Abraham Accords, Negev Forum, and Regional Integration Opportunity Fund.
Sec. 9. United States, Abraham Accords, and Negev Forum economic partnership.
Sec. 10. Supporting regional integration through multilaterals, scientific collaboration, and interfaith initiatives.
Sec. 11. Supporting regional integration through a young Middle East leaders initiative program.
Sec. 12. Supporting regional integration through educational exchange and people-to-people engagement.
Sec. 13. Strengthening and expanding the Abraham Accords and Negev Forum through industrial and scientific research and development.
Sec. 15. Joint cybersecurity training activities and information sharing.
Sec. 16. Leveraging United States economic toolkit to support regional integration and normalization efforts.
Sec. 17. Cooperative projects among the United States, Israel, and Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries.
Sec. 18. Supporting structures that expand cooperation across regions in key areas.

1 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ABRAHAM ACCORDS.—The term “Abraham Accords” means—

(A) the Abraham Accords Declaration, done at Washington September 15, 2020;

(B) the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization Between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, done at Washington September 15, 2020;

(C) the Abraham Accords: Declaration of Peace, Cooperation, and Constructive Diplomatic and Friendly Relations, done at Wash-
ington September 15, 2020, between Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain; and

(D) the Joint Declaration of the Kingdom of Morocco, the United States, and Israel, done at Rabat December 22, 2020.

(2) ABRAHAM ACCORDS COUNTRY.—The term “Abraham Accords country” means a country that is a party to the Abraham Accords.

(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(4) EXPAND.—The term “expand”, with respect to the Abraham Accords, means to increase the number of regional, Arab, or Muslim-majority countries that seek to normalize relations with the State of Israel.

(5) FUND.—The term “Fund” means the Abraham Accords and Negev Forum Opportunity Fund established under section 8.
(6) **Key Partners in Regional Integration.**—The term “key partners in regional integration” means—

(A) any Abraham Accords country;

(B) Egypt;

(C) Jordan;

(D) the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and

(E) any other active and constructive country that supports cooperation—

(i) to normalize relations between countries in the Middle East and North Africa and Israel; and

(ii) to advance regional integration.

(7) **Negev Forum.**—The term “Negev Forum” means the regional grouping known as the Negev Forum Regional Cooperation Framework that was adopted on November 10, 2022, or any successor group.

(8) **Negev Forum Country.**—The term “Negev Forum country” means the government of any of the following countries:

(A) Bahrain.

(B) Egypt.

(C) Israel.

(D) Morocco.
(E) The United Arab Emirates.

(F) The United States.

(G) Any country that joins the Negev Forum as a full member after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(9) Observer.—The term “observer”—

(A) means any country, particularly inside the Middle East and North Africa region, or political entity that—

(i) directly supports the objectives and processes of the Negev Forum;

(ii) expresses serious interest in participating in certain projects determined by the Negev Forum that benefit normalization with Israel and greater regional integration; and

(iii) is not an official member of the Negev Forum Steering Committee or any working group of the Negev Forum; and

(B) includes 3+1 format members Cyprus and Greece.

(10) Other Regional Actors.—The term “other regional actors” means the Palestinian Authority or a credible future political entity that serves as the interlocutor for the Palestinian people.
(11) **SPECIAL ENVOY.**—The term “Special Envoy” means the Special Presidential Envoy for the Abraham Accords, Negev Forum, and Related Normalization Agreements established under section 6.

(12) **STRENGTHEN.**—The term “strengthen”, with respect to the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum, means to engage in efforts that improve the diplomatic relations between Abraham Accords countries and broaden the breadth and scope of issues on which Abraham Accords countries cooperate.

**SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds the following:

(1) On March 26, 1979, Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel, becoming the first Arab country to establish full, normalized, diplomatic relations with Israel.

(2) On October 26, 1994, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, becoming the second Arab country to normalize ties with Israel.

(3) On March 27, 2002, the Arab League unanimously endorsed the Arab Peace Initiative, which offered the possibility of normalized relations between the Arab League and Israel for the first time.
(4) On September 15, 2020, the governments of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed bilateral agreements, known collectively as the Abraham Accords, to normalize relations with Israel.

(5) Sudan and Morocco agreed to normalize ties with Israel on October 23, 2020, and December 10, 2020, respectively.

(6) Collectively, such agreements marked the first normalizations of diplomatic relations with Israel since the normalizations between Israel and Jordan in 1994 and Israel and Egypt in 1979.

(7) In March 2022, the foreign ministers of Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States convened in Sde Boker, Israel, for the first Negev Summit and agreed to form a framework that—

(A) multilateralizes regional cooperation that centers on countries that have normalized relations with Israel; and

(B) is inclusive of other countries and interested parties.

(8) In January 2023, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, senior officials of the Negev Forum countries held the inaugural meeting of the Negev Forum working groups, which are the following:
8

(A) Regional Security.

(B) Education.

(C) Food and Water Security.

(D) Energy.

(E) Tourism.

(F) Healthcare.

(9) Overall trade between Israel and Abraham Accords countries increased from $593,000,000 to $3,470,000,000 between 2019 and 2022, according to the Israeli Census Bureau.

(10) On May 29, 2022, Egypt and Israel agreed to jointly upgrade the Nitzana Border Crossing to “promote trade relations with Egypt and create quality employment in the south, alongside activity by Israeli companies in the Egyptian market” and to boost annual bilateral trade to $700,000,000 by 2025.

(11) On June 19, 2022, an Egyptian trade delegation and members of the Federation of Egyptian Industries visited Israel for the first time in a decade.

(12) On May 31, 2022, the United Arab Emirates and Israel signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Government of
the State of Israel, entered into force April 1, 2023 (commonly known as the “UAE-Israel CEPA”), abolishing customs duties on 96 percent of the products exchanged between the two countries, including food, agricultural goods, cosmetics, medical equipment, and medicine.

(13) On December 11, 2022, the governments of the United Arab Emirates and Israel ratified the UAE-Israel CEPA;

(14) Tourism in the Middle East has increased since the Abraham Accords were signed.

(15) In 2022, at least 350,000 Israelis traveled to the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Bahrain.

(16) The Abrahamic Family House, an interfaith complex to promote the values of human solidarity, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence, was officially inaugurated and opened to worshippers on February 16, 2023, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

(17) Joint water security and clean energy projects between Negev Forum countries have deepened as a result of normalization.

(18) On November 8, 2022, Jordan, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates signed a memorandum of
understanding with respect to Project Prosperity, a project to build a 600-megawatt solar farm in Jordan and a water desalination plant in Israel to export 300,000,000 cubic meters of desalinated water to Jordan annually.

(19) On November 17, 2022, Morocco and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate on drinking water and liquid sanitation.

(20) Research and innovation collaboration have increased between Negev Forum countries in aviation, technology, and healthcare.

(21) On July 4, 2021, Emirati and Israeli medical institutions partnered to create a digital health platform for remote patient management in Dubai.

(22) On March 23, 2022, Morocco and Israel signed an agreement to cooperate on civilian aerospace projects.

(23) On June 24, 2022, the Minister of Interior of Israel launched a pilot program to attract Moroccan workers to construction, programming, and nursing sectors in Israel.

(24) On September 14, 2022, Abdelmalek Essaddi University in Morocco and the University of Haifa in Israel signed a memorandum of under-
standing to advance cooperation in marine research and technologies.

(25) Educational and cultural ties have deepened between Negev Forum countries through university programs, media, and community activism.

(26) On November 18, 2021, the United Arab Emirates and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding with respect to educational affairs, promoting exchanges between academics and students.

(27) On January 11, 2022, the Association of Gulf Jewish Communities launched a fundraising campaign to restore a 100-year-old Jewish cemetery in Bahrain.

(28) On March 31, 2022, the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Morocco signed a document of academic cooperation.

(29) On May 31, 2022, i24NEWS became the first Israeli news network to open bureaus in Morocco.

(30) In December 2022, a delegation of Israeli influencers, comprised of prominent Jewish and Arab content creators in the fields of music, sports, fashion, science, and comedy, visited Morocco on a
trip organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel.

(31) On January 9, 2023, the United Arab Emirates announced it would include Holocaust education in the curriculum for primary and secondary schools.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) advanced levels of economic and cultural integration in a region correlate with greater stability, faster rates of economic growth, higher levels of economic competitiveness, and overall improved prosperity for the people living in such a region;

(2) deeper cooperation and regional integration among Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, observers, other key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors is fundamental to the long-term stability, prosperity, competitiveness, and success of the Middle East and North Africa;

(3) promoting regional integration in the Middle East and North Africa and formal normalization between Israel, neighboring Arab countries, and non-Arab countries outside of the Middle East and North Africa, is in the strategic interest of the
United States, and should be a key pillar of United States foreign policy;

(4) regional integration in the Middle East and North Africa should remain an open and inclusive process with opportunities for participants beyond only those countries with formal normalization;

(5) civil society engagement and people-to-people connections are critical to successful and sustainable regional integration among Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, observers, other key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors;

(6) the Negev Forum, any successor group, and other regional integration initiatives would benefit from constructive and positive participation by the Palestinian Authority, or a credible, future political entity that serves as the interlocutor for the Palestinian people, while also strengthening the Palestinian economy and improving the quality of life for Palestinian people through United States support in compliance with the Taylor Force Act (Title X of division S of Public Law 115–141) and other applicable Federal laws;

(7) constructive Palestinian participation in the Negev Forum, or a successor group, should remain
a priority for current and future structures, as inclusivity will build stronger support for normalization with Israel and create momentum towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace; and

(8) efforts to deepen and expand the Abraham Accords, the Negev Forum, and future regional organizations can reduce the likelihood of conflict, improve ties between Israel and neighboring countries, and advance the goal of achieving lasting peace in the Middle East, which serves the longstanding goal of United States policy which has been to support a comprehensive and sustainable peace that includes mutual recognition, dignity, and peaceful neighborly relations between Israelis and Palestinians towards two states for two peoples.

SEC. 5. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to strengthen and expand the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum within the Middle East and North Africa and beyond;

(2) to institutionalize regional integration as a key pillar of policies of the United States with respect to the Middle East and North Africa;
(3) to maintain the leadership of and facilitation by the United States with respect to integration efforts in the Middle East and North Africa;

(4) to facilitate efforts to normalize relations formally between Israel and neighboring Arab and Muslim-majority countries to achieve shared regional integration, cooperation, and development objectives, consistent with the national security, economic, and development interests of the United States;

(5) to engage in active diplomacy to expand the number of participants in formal normalization frameworks, as well as in non-formal integration structures in the Middle East and North Africa;

(6) to strengthen collective security by continuing and expanding efforts on regional defense cooperation, as required by strategic interests of the United States;

(7) to develop and implement an integrated regional security strategy in the Middle East and North Africa that—

(A) recognizes the shared threat posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and its proxies and violent extremism and terrorism;

(B) ensures sufficient United States deterrence in the region;
(C) builds partner capacity to address shared threats; and

(D) reinforces the importance of multilateral security arrangements;

(8) to encourage deeper trade, business, commercial, and investment relationships between Negev Forum countries, observers, and key partners in regional integration, in line with the economic and development interests of the people of the United States and United States partners and allies in the region;

(9) to support the work of the Negev Forum and the Negev Forum working groups on food security and water technology, energy, tourism, healthcare, education and coexistence, and regional security;

(10) to expand the Negev Forum working groups as necessary and appropriate, including by modifying the framework as future needs and opportunities arise;

(11) to support integration initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa that strengthen the Palestinian economy and improve the quality of life for Palestinians;
(12) to urge Negev Forum countries and Abraham Accords countries to oppose efforts to isolate, delegitimize, or diplomatically boycott Israel in international or regional bodies, including the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Security Council, United Nations Human Rights Council, and other entities of the United Nations;

(13) to foster religious freedom, coexistence, and tolerance throughout the Middle East through interfaith and intercultural dialogue between Israel and Arab and Muslim-majority countries; and

(14) develop a comprehensive interagency effort to support the policy described in paragraphs (1) through (13).

SEC. 6. UNITED STATES SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY FOR THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS, NEGEV FORUM, AND RELATED NORMALIZATION AGREEMENTS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department of State the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for the Abraham Accords, Negev Forum, and Related Integration and Normalization Fora and Agreements (referred to in this section as the “Regional Integration Office”).

(b) LEADERSHIP.—
(1) **SPECIAL ENVOY.**—The Regional Integration Office shall be headed by the Special Presidential Envoy for the Abraham Accords, Negev Forum, and Related Normalization Agreements, who shall—

(A) be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate; and

(B) report directly to the Secretary of State.

(2) **RANK.**—The Special Envoy shall have the rank and status of ambassador.

e) **LIMITATION.**—The Special Envoy shall not be a dual-hatted official with other responsibilities within the Department of State or the executive branch.

d) **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Special Envoy shall—

(1) lead diplomatic engagement—

(A) to strengthen and expand the Negev Forum, the Abraham Accords, and related normalization agreements with Israel, including promoting initiatives that benefit the people of key partners in regional integration or other regional actors in order to encourage such expansion; and

(B) to support the work of regional integration;
(2) implement the policy of the United States to expand normalization and support greater regional integration—

(A) within the Middle East and North Africa; and

(B) between the Middle East and North Africa and other key regions, including sub-Saharan Africa, the Indo-Pacific region, and beyond;

(3) work to deliver tangible economic and security benefits for the citizens of Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and countries that are members of other related normalization agreements;

(4) serve as the ministerial liaison for the United States to the Negev Forum, and other emerging normalization and integration fora, as necessary, and provide senior representation at events, steering committee meetings, and other relevant diplomatic engagements relating to the Negev Forum or other regional integration bodies;

(5) coordinate all cross-agency engagements and strategies in support of normalization efforts with other relevant officials and agencies;
(6) ensure that the appropriate congressional committees are regularly informed about the work of the Regional Integration Office;

(7) initiate and advance negotiations on a framework for an economic and security partnership with the Negev Forum countries, other key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors; and

(8) oppose efforts to delegitimize Israel and legal barriers to normalization with Israel.

(e) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that whole-of-government resources should be harnessed to ensure the successful performance by the Special Envoy of the duties described in subsection (d).

(f) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Special Envoy shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on actions taken by all relevant Federal agencies—

(1) to strengthen and expand the Abraham Accords and the work of the Negev Forum and future structures and organizations; and
(2) towards the objectives of regional integration.

(g) TERMINATION.—This section shall terminate on the date that is 6 years after date of the enactment of this Act.

(h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—If, on the date of the enactment of this Act, an individual has already been designated, consistent with the requirements and responsibilities described in subsections (b), (c), and (d) and section 1 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2651a), the requirements under subsection (b) shall be considered to be satisfied with respect to such individual until the date on which such individual no longer serves as the Special Envoy.

SEC. 7. ENHANCED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE ISRAEL RELATIONS NORMALIZATION ACT.

Section 105(b) of the Israel Relations Normalization Act (division Z of Public Law 117–103; 136 Stat. 1061) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(12) An assessment of ongoing and future United States Government efforts to support the Negev Forum and its component working groups.
“(13) An assessment of ongoing and future United States Government efforts to encourage Israel and key partners in regional integration to—

“(A) use efficient and innovative energy technologies;

“(B) ensure equitable access to quality and relevant education and healthcare;

“(C) foster cooperation between Israel, Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and other key partners in regional integration in the fields of maritime security and integration, and integrated air and missile defense;

“(D) develop and harness technologies to mitigate food and water insecurity; and

“(E) foster equal measures of freedom, security, prosperity, and stability for all citizens of the region.

“(14) Recommendations on how to support economic conditions that promote commercial engagement, innovation, competitiveness, new businesses, inclusive economic growth, and the education of future innovators, entrepreneurs, and business leaders in the region.
“(15) An assessment of the policy and regulatory environment for tourism, trade, innovation, and investment in Negev Forum countries and recommendations on how to improve regional integration for such sectors.

“(16) Recommendations on how to forge partnerships with non-Negev Forum states, observers, and other key partners in regional integration that share the vision of the Negev Forum for regional integration.”

“(17) A detailed description of efforts to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia and associated impacts on the region, including regional security, Arab-Israeli dynamics, trade, and development.

“(18) An assessment of the structure, frequency of meeting, and format of working groups of the Negev Forum and recommendations to maximize economic and security benefits for Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries.”.

**SEC. 8. ABRAHAM ACCORDS, NEGEV FORUM, AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITY FUND.**

(a) **STATEMENT OF POLICY.**—It is the policy of the United States—
(1) to advance regional economic integration and provide tangible economic benefits to Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries;

(2) to promote the economic security of allies and partners of the United States by encouraging the development of accessible, transparent, and competitive markets; and

(3) to encourage public and private sector investment in projects in Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and other key partner countries to expand inclusive economic development in a way that is consistent with the absorptive capacity of the Middle East and North Africa.

(b) Establishment.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund to be known as the “Abraham Accords, Negev Forum, and Regional Integration Opportunity Fund”, which shall consist of amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (d).

(c) Use of Funds.—The Secretary of State and the Special Envoy, in consultation with other relevant Federal agencies, shall administer the Fund to advance regional economic integration and provide tangible security and economic benefits to Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries.
(d) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Treasury $105,000,000 for fiscal years 2024 through 2030.

(e) Transfer Authority.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Special Envoy, may transfer any amount of the funds authorized under subsection (d) to any account of the Department of State or any other Federal agency to effectively implement the policy described in subsection (a).

(f) Congressional Notification.—None of the funds authorized under subsection (d) may be obligated or expended under this section until the Secretary of State notifies the appropriate congressional committees and the Committee on Appropriations of each House of the Congress of the amount and nature of the proposed obligation or expenditure not fewer than 15 days in advance of the date of the proposed obligation or expenditure, in accordance with the procedures applicable to notifications regarding reprogrammings pursuant to 634A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2394–1).

(g) Strategy.—

(1) In General.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Special Envoy, in consultation with other relevant Fed-
eral agencies as determined by the Special Envoy, shall develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy that includes the following elements:

(A) An estimate of the spend rate of the Fund for fiscal years 2024 through 2030.

(B) An estimate of the amounts to be transferred from the Treasury to other Federal agencies in the first 3 years of the Fund.

(C) An analysis of how the Fund can be used to strengthen and expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Israel, Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and key partners in regional integration.

(2) FORM.—The strategy required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(h) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for the next 6 years, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the relevant Federal agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the activities and use of funds under this section, including any amounts
transferred to other Federal agencies from the Treasury.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 9. UNITED STATES, ABRAHAM ACCORDS, AND NEGEV FORUM ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States should seek to develop and negotiate a comprehensive framework for economic engagement with Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and key partners in regional integration to deepen regulatory alignment, expand regional economic growth, attract investment, increase competitiveness, and strengthen and secure supply chains;

(2) the Special Envoy should initiate negotiations with Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries, observers, and key partners in regional integration on an economic framework that includes—

(A) improving supply chain security and resiliency;

(B) aligning common regulatory and financial standards;
(C) attracting foreign investment;

(D) diversification of energy resources, including renewable sources of energy, and the development and deployment of emerging and advanced technologies that promote energy security; and

(E) digital economy, cybersecurity, and cross-border data flow;

(3) the Special Envoy, in consultation with all other relevant Federal agencies, should lead inter-agency efforts to reach an international agreement on the comprehensive economic framework described by paragraph (2); and

(4) the Special Envoy should endeavor to embed already established standards on countering money laundering and terrorist financing into the regional economic framework described by paragraph (2).

SEC. 10. SUPPORTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH MULTILATERALS, SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION, AND INTERFAITH INITIATIVES.

(a) DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROGRAMS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State $2,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028, of which—
(1) $500,000 shall be made available in the Fund to provide support for expanding participation by Negev Forum countries in the Middle East Desalination Research Center;

(2) $1,000,000 shall be made available for the Middle East Multilaterals program of the Department of State to provide support for the work of the Negev Forum and its corresponding working groups; and

(3) $1,000,000 shall be made available for interfaith dialogue programming between Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, observers, other regional actors, and key partners in regional integration, and the United States for the purpose of fostering mutual trust, reducing harmful perceptions, and promoting sustainable peace and cooperation in the region, through projects that—

(A) support programming centered on coexistence and interfaith education; and

(B) seek to restore and preserve Jewish sites in Arab countries both in and outside the Abraham Accords and Negev Forum.

(b) UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.—
1 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
2 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Admin-
3istrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
4national Development $6,000,000 for fiscal year
5 2024, for the Middle East Regional Cooperation
6 (MERC) program.
7
8 (2) PRIORITIZATION.—The Administrator shall
9 prioritize the awarding of funding authorized under
10 paragraph (1) for proposals submitted by Abraham
11 Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, other re-
12 gional actors, or key partners in regional integration
13 that support Negev Forum objectives.
14
15 (c) BURDEN SHARING.—Assistance agreements en-
16 tered into by the Secretary of State or the Administrator
17 of the United States Agency for International Develop-
18 ment under this section shall include provisions to promote
19 domestic resource mobilization and cost-sharing, as deter-
20 mined necessary and appropriate by the Secretary or the
21 Administrator, as the case may be.
22
23 (d) INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RE-
24 PORT.—In the Annual Report on International Religious
25 Freedom submitted by the Secretary of State in accord-
26 ance with section 102(b) of the International Religious
27 Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6412(b)), the Secretary
28 of State shall, for each Abraham Accords country and
29
1 Negev Forum country, include information on progress
2 and challenges relating to the Negev Working Group on
3 Education and Tolerance and advancing religious toler-
4 ance and interfaith understanding among and within the
5 Abraham Accords countries.
6
7 (e) REPORT ON FUNDING.—Not later than 1 year
after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Rela-
tions of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs
of the House of Representatives a report on the use of
the funds appropriated in accordance with subsection (a),
which shall include—

(1) a description of any programs funded; and
(2) a list of countries in which such programs
were executed to support the purposes described by
subsection (a)(3).

SEC. 11. SUPPORTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH
A YOUNG MIDDLE EAST LEADERS INITIATIVE
PROGRAM.
(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the
United States—

(1) to provide educational and professional op-
portunities to Middle Eastern youth through scholar-
ships, leadership programs, and cultural exchanges
that create and sustain mutual understanding with
other countries and cultivate people-to-people ties; and

(2) to support the long-term prosperity and stability of Negev Forum countries, key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors by improving educational and professional opportunities for young people in the Middle East and North Africa and to promote youth participation in civil society, governance, and politics.

(b) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Department of State the Young Middle East Leaders Initiative (referred to in this section as the “YMELI program”).

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The YMELI program shall be jointly administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

(d) PURPOSE.—The YMELI program shall seek to build the capacity of young leaders in Negev Forum countries, key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors to address issues in the areas of energy diversification, education and coexistence, business development and investment promotion, food and water security, health, regional security, and tourism, including through efforts—

(1) to support young leaders by offering professional development, training, and networking oppor-
tunities to increase the educational capacity of youth in the Middle East and North Africa in such areas; and

(2) to provide increased economic and technical assistance to young leaders in Negev Forum countries, key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors to promote economic growth and strengthen ties between the United States and such groups.

(c) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated $2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to support the creation of the YMELI program and other people-to-people exchange programs.

(f) Fellowships.—The YMELI program shall award fellowships through the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program to eligible young leaders.

(g) Regional Leadership Centers.—The YMELI program may establish regional leadership centers in Negev Forum countries and key partners in regional integration to offer training to eligible young leaders.

(h) Activities.—

(1) United States-based activities.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
national Development and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall oversee all United States-based activities carried out under the YMELI program.

(2) MENA-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall support activities carried out under the YMELI program in Negev Forum countries, key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors, including by providing—

(A) access to continued leadership training and other professional development opportunities, including online courses, technical assistance, and access to funding, for alumni of the YMELI program upon the return of such alumni to their home countries;

(B) training to eligible young leaders at regional leadership centers established in accordance with subsection (g) and through online and in-person courses offered by such centers; and

(C) opportunities for networking and engagement with—
(i) alumni of the YMELI program at regional leadership centers established in accordance with subsection (g); and

(ii) United States organizations, business leaders, and others, as appropriate.

(i) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall seek to partner with the private sector to pursue public-private partnerships, leverage private sector expertise, expand networking opportunities, and identify funding opportunities and fellowship and employment opportunities for participants in the YMELI program.

(j) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a plan for implementing the YMELI program, which shall include—

(1) a description of clearly defined program goals, targets, and planned outcomes for each year and for the duration of the YMELI program;
(2) a strategy to monitor and evaluate the YMELI program and progress made toward achieving such goals, targets, and planned outcomes; and

(3) a strategy to ensure that the YMELI program is promoting United States foreign policy goals in the Middle East and North Africa, including ensuring that the YMELI program is clearly branded and paired with robust public diplomacy efforts.

(k) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for the next 5 years, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes—

(A) a description of the progress made toward achieving the goals, targets, and planned outcomes described in subsection (j)(1), including an overview of the implementation of the YMELI program during the previous year and an estimated number of YMELI program beneficiaries during such year;

(B) an assessment of how the YMELI program is contributing to and promoting relations
between the United States and Negev Forum
countries, particularly in areas of increased pri-
ivate sector investment, trade promotion, sup-
port to civil society, improved public adminis-
tration, and fostering entrepreneurship and
youth empowerment; and

(C) recommendations for improvements or
changes to the YMELI program, if any, that
would improve the ongoing effectiveness of the
YMELI program.

(2) Publication.—The Secretary of State
shall publish the report submitted pursuant to para-
graph (1) on a publicly accessible website of the De-
partment of State.

(l) Eligible Young Leader Defined.—In this
section, the term “eligible young leader” means an indi-
vidual who—

(1) is between 18 and 35 years of age;

(2) has demonstrated strong capabilities in en-
trepreneurship, innovation, public service, and lead-
ership; and

(3) has positively impacted a community, orga-
nization, or institution.
SEC. 12. SUPPORTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT.

(a) Educational Exchange.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of State for the Middle East Partnership Initiative $1,000,000 for fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to support educational and cultural exchange programs to allow—

1. Israeli students to study in Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and key partners in regional integration that maintain relations with Israel; and

2. students from such countries that maintain relations with Israel to study in Israel.

(b) People-to-People and Civil Society Engagement.—The Middle East Partnership Initiative may support grants and projects that seek to build better cooperation and understanding to foster the exchange of ideas among Israelis, Palestinians, and other citizens from Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors.

(c) Burden Sharing.—Assistance agreements entered into by the Secretary of State under this section may include provisions to promote cost-sharing with partners, as determined necessary and appropriate by the Secretary, as the case may be.
SEC. 13. STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS AND NEGEV FORUM THROUGH INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) ISRAEL-UNITED STATES BINATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION.—To facilitate multilateral cooperation between the United States, Israel, Abraham Accords countries, and Negev Forum countries, the Israel-United States Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation, under the arrangement as entered into in 1977, may provide grants to initiatives that involve institutions from Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries.

(b) UNITED STATES-ISRAEL BINATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To facilitate multilateral cooperation between the United States, Israel, and the Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries, the United States-Israel Binational Science Foundation, under the arrangement as entered into in 1972, may provide grants to initiatives that involve scientists and researchers from Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries, consistent with the national security, economic, and development interests of the United States.
(2) LIMITATIONS.—The Foundation may not provide grants for projects or initiatives that collaborate with or receive funding from entities located in a country of concern, and shall not engage in life sciences research of dual-use concern.

(c) COUNTRY OF CONCERN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “country of concern” means any of the following:

(1) The People’s Republic of China.
(2) The Russian Federation.
(3) The Islamic Republic of Iran.
(4) The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.
(5) The Republic of Cuba.
(6) The Syrian Arab Republic.

SEC. 14. BINATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUND.

(a) Section 1458(e) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3291(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “entered into” and inserting “as entered into in 1977”; and
(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “;” and
and’’ and inserting a semicolon;
(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the
period at the end and inserting ‘‘; and’’; and
(C) by adding at the end the following:
(C) when appropriate, facilitate the in-
volvement of Abraham Accords countries and
Negev Forum countries (as those terms are de-
finied in the Regional Integration and Normal-
ization Act of 2023) in cooperative projects
with the United States and Israel that further
economic cooperation among the countries in-
volved in such projects, consistent with the na-
tional security, economic, and development in-
terests of the United States.’’.

SEC. 15. JOINT CYBERSECURITY TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND
INFORMATION SHARING.

(a) Sense of Congress.—It is the sense of Con-
gress that the United States should—
(1) build on the formal expansion of the Abra-
ham Accords and other regional integration fora, as
appropriate, into cybersecurity, which was an-
nounced by the Department of Homeland Security
on February 2, 2023; and
(2) seek to increase collective cybersecurity and
resilience, address shared cybersecurity threats, and
promote normalization and regional integration efforts.

(b) Training Activities.—The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and other relevant Federal agencies, as appropriate, may engage in joint cybersecurity training activities and other information-sharing activities relating to cybersecurity, as appropriate, with Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum counties, and key partners in regional integration, including by encouraging participation by such countries in the National Cyber Exercise Program established under section 2220B of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 665h).

(e) Report.—

(1) In general.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that contains a description of any potential benefits and impacts to the United States of an annual tabletop cybersecurity exercise carried out in conjunction with Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries.

(2) Form.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.
(d) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 16. LEVERAGING UNITED STATES ECONOMIC TOOLKIT TO SUPPORT REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND NORMALIZATION EFFORTS.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to promote regional integration and broader interconnectivity among the Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, observers, key partners in regional integration, and other regional actors by promoting and supporting targeted investment in regional infrastructure and other critical sectors that broaden and deepen interconnectivity, increase economic growth and resilience, create benefits for citizens of Abraham Accords countries and Negev Forum countries, and advance the national security, economic, and development interests of the United States.
(b) **Strategic Plan.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an interagency strategy to use the economic tools of the Federal Government to promote regional integration through targeted investment as described in subsection (a).

**SEC. 17. COOPERATIVE PROJECTS AMONG THE UNITED STATES, ISRAEL, AND ABRAHAM ACCORDS COUNTRIES AND NEGEV FORUM COUNTRIES.**

(a) In General.—Section 106(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151d(e)) is amended to read as follows:

“(e) There is authorized to be appropriated $4,000,000 for fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to finance cooperative projects among the United States, Israel, and Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and key partners in regional integration (as those terms are defined in the Regional Integration and Normalization Act of 2023) that identify and support local solutions that address sustainability challenges relating to water resources, agriculture, and energy storage, including for the following activities:

“(1) Establishing public-private partnerships.
“(2) Supporting the identification, research, development testing, and scaling of innovations that focus on populations that are vulnerable to environmental and resource-scarcity crises, such as subsistence farming communities.

“(3) Seed or transition-to-scale funding.

“(4) Clear and appropriate marking, branding, and marketing of United States-funded assistance.

“(5) Accelerating demonstration or application of local solutions to sustainability challenges, or the further refinement, testing, or implementation of innovations that have previously effectively addressed sustainability challenges.”.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the feasibility and advisability of expanding to Abraham Accords countries, Negev Forum countries, and key partners in regional integration the projects described in section 106(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151d(e)), as amended by subsection (a), in-
cluding projects involving multilateral cooperation among the United States, Israel, and Negev Forum countries, observers, and key partners in regional integration to promote development in Africa.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 18. SUPPORTING STRUCTURES THAT EXPAND OPERATION ACROSS REGIONS IN KEY AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States has a strategic interest in fostering cross-regional cooperation and economic integration between partners in the Indo-Pacific region and partners in the Middle East and North Africa.

(2) Consistent with the strategic interest described in paragraph (1), the regional grouping known as the I2U2 comprising the governments of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States was formally established in October 2021.

(3) The I2U2 aligns like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region and the Middle East and North Africa on key mutual areas of cooperation, in-
cluding water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.

(4) The I2U2 complements other multilateral initiatives, including the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum, by bringing together Israel and regional partners to address regional challenges and advance economic integration.

(5) By convening 4 major economies with advanced technology sectors, the I2U2 provides a forum to increase cooperation on the development and deployment of advanced energy technologies and promote energy security.

(6) In May 2023, senior officials from the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and India met in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to discuss cross-regional infrastructure development, rail transportation, and connectivity.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States should—

(A) build on the initiatives outlined at the inaugural I2U2 leaders’ summit on July 14, 2022, to address food security and energy secu-
rity needs in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia;

(B) work through the I2U2 framework to promote resilience in the Indo-Pacific region to bolster energy security;

(C) encourage private sector investment and business-to-business cooperation through initiatives like the I2U2 Business Forum;

(D) encourage academic cooperation and exchanges among scholars working in India, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel to develop advanced energy technologies; and

(E) encourage further regional initiatives, such as Project Prosperity, to promote regional integration and resilience in the face of increasing water and energy shortages; and

(2) the Secretary of State should—

(A) explore additional areas of cooperation between United States partners in the Middle East and North Africa and United States partners in the Indo-Pacific region to broaden strategic alignment across a range of important security, economic, and other issues; and
(B) consider expansion of the I2U2 to include other key partners in regional integration, including Saudi Arabia.