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SEN. SMITH INTRODUCES LEGISLATION REQUESTING UN MEMBERSHIP FOR ISRAEL

Smith Says Bill Sends a Message to UN to Stop Discrimination Against Israel

WASHINGTON — Oregon Senator Gordon H. Smith announced today that he has again introduced legislation requiring the Secretary of State to report on the progress being made by the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to see that Israel is allowed membership into the UN. Israel has been denied membership in the UN for fifty years and is the only nation among the 185 member states that does not hold membership in a regional group — a prerequisite for any nation to serve on key UN bodies such as the Security Council.

"It is my intention with this legislation to prompt the Department of State to make equality for Israel a priority for the UN," Smith said.

Last year UN Secretary General Kofi Annan gave support to the idea of Israel's acceptance into the UN saying, "It's time to usher in a new era of relations between Israel and the United Nations ..." General Annan went on to say that allowing Israel to join the UN, and subsequently contribute to key advisory bodies such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, is an important first step. Smith said it is imperative for Congress to heed General Annan's words.

"The discrimination directed toward Israel by the United Nations for the last fifty years is reprehensible," Smith said. "It is time for the Senate to demand answers from the UN. My legislation is intended to force the UN to heed General Annan's words."

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