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## GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON'S WEEKLY ADDRESS | STRENGTHENING ARKANSAS'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL

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**/ Governor Hutchinson's Weekly Address |  
Strengthening Arkansas's Relationship with  
Israel**

Governor Hutchinson's weekly radio address can be found in MP3 format and downloaded [HERE](#).

LITTLE ROCK – I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Israel Innovation Authority this week, and today I'd like to talk about what this means to Arkansas.

On Tuesday, my economic development team gathered with Dr. Ami Appelbaum, Chairman of the Innovation Authority, and Livia Link, Consul General of Israel. We gathered at the Melrose Hotel in Washington for the signing ceremony.

Dr. Appelbaum and I signed copies of the agreement in English and in Hebrew.

This agreement affirms the mutual interest of Arkansas and Israel to share ideas and to work together to produce technology that will benefit our nations and the world.

In the official language of the MOU, the purpose of this agreement is to promote activities to foster mutual cooperation in the innovation and development of technology.

I met Dr. Appelbaum last year when I was in Israel for the Prime Minister's Smart Mobility Summit. This MOU is a logical next step to strengthen our robust relationship with one of the United States' most important allies. It affirms the deep friendship and mutual respect between Arkansas and Israel.

Our relationship with the Jewish community dates to 1823 when businessman Abraham Block and his family were the first Jewish family to take up residence in Arkansas. Mr. Block and his sons opened businesses in four Arkansas counties, in New Orleans, and in Texas. The Blocks' home in Washington is a museum in Historic Washington State Park.

I have had the privilege of expressing our support of Israel by signing bills that allow Arkansas to invest in Israel bonds and that prohibit state and local governments from conducting business with companies that boycott Israel.

As Israel's ambassador said at the bill signing that day in August 2017, we were sending a message that Arkansas stands against hate and against anti-Semitism, and that Arkansas stands with Israel.

This agreement is a natural progression of our relationship with Israel.

My friendships within the Arkansas Jewish community have led to many personally enriching opportunities, such as participating in the annual Menorah lighting ceremony in Little Rock. I was equally enriched by the brief time we spent with our friends from Israel on Tuesday.

As I prepared to sign the Hebrew version of the MOU, I suggested that I was going to use my Hebrew name, which brought some laughter. The joke, of course, is that Asa is a Hebrew name.

Now that we have signed the MOU, we will explore what's next in this mutually beneficial partnership between two leaders in innovation and technology as we embark on the next stage of our long relationship.

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