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Governor Baker, Delegation Return From Economic Development Mission to Israel  
Two significant agreements signed solidifying mutually beneficial relationship between Massachusetts and Israel on cybersecurity and digital health

BOSTON-- Today, Governor Charlie Baker and a business delegation, including nearly 50 leaders and over 20 presidents and chief executive officers in digital health, cybersecurity, public policy, academia, and other industry sectors, returned from an Economic Development Mission to Israel. Over the course of four days, the delegation participated in various forums and site visits with Israeli partners to attract more business in the Commonwealth.

"Massachusetts has an opportunity to be a major player in both the digital health and cybersecurity spaces, and we are pleased to have formed new relationships and strengthened others in Israel over the course of this economic development mission,” said Governor Baker. "Digital health innovation, protected through cybersecurity breakthroughs, hold real potential to improve the delivery of care, and we were pleased to undertake this mission to show the global market that Massachusetts does not take a back seat to Silicon Valley when it comes to supporting and growing a high-tech economy."

Highlighting the importance of cybersecurity in digital health care and the protection of connected technologies, the Massachusetts Tech Collaborative and Israel's CyberSpark signed an agreement during a luncheon on the first day of the mission
attended by executives from many of Israel's leading cybersecurity firms. The agreement focuses collaboration around applied research projects on healthcare related cyber issues and practical trainings for students in cybersecurity fields, among other key areas. This partnership builds on the work of the Baker-Polito Administration on the Massachusetts Digital Health Initiative.

On Monday, the delegation joined over 400 Israeli business leaders in the fields of cybersecurity and digital health for the **U.S – Israel Growth Summit** hosted by the Commonwealth at Tel Aviv University. **Moderating a discussion** entitled "From Startup to Fortune 500 Digital Health Company in the USA," Governor Baker engaged with Athena Health CEO and President, Jonathan Bush, and Optum Inc. CEO, Larry Renfro, to highlight all that Massachusetts has to offer Israeli companies looking for a home away from home.

During the Summit, **Laurie Leshin, president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute** and a member of the Mission delegation, **announced a new project center** in the "'start-up nation' of Israel," formalizing a growing collaboration focused on innovation in the STEM fields. Cybersecurity, water and energy are among the local problems the first WPI students to travel to Israel next year will work to solve. President Leshin said Israel was chosen as a project center because it is a place that "embrace[s] innovation as a means to positively impact people's lives."

Governor Baker, accompanied by First Lady Lauren Baker, Consul General Yehuda Yaakov and Brandeis President Ronald Liebowitz, **met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** to discuss the economic futures and relationships of the Commonwealth and Israel. During a productive meeting, **Prime Minister Netanyahu** shared why Israel was an early entrant into the cybersecurity field and the field's importance to Israel’s national security. The two leaders, who both spend time in Cambridge as students, also spoke about the amazing growth of Massachusetts' technology sector.

Renewing a longstanding special relationship between the Commonwealth and the State of Israel, Governor Baker and Israeli **Chief Scientist Avi Hasson**, along with Israeli Economic Minister to North America Inon Elroy, **committed each government** to strengthening economic, industrial, technological, and commercial cooperation. The new bilateral cooperation agreement engages both Massachusetts and Israel to identify and advance joint research and development efforts that will lead to the commercialization of new products in the global marketplace.

Employing 500 people in Israel and boasting a dozen active investments in Israel through GE Ventures, **General Electric** hosted an event attended by nearly 300 from the Israeli tech industry as of the Mission. Governor Baker **expressed his excitement** about what GE's commitment to Massachusetts means for innovation in the
Commonwealth and its relationship with Israel. Michael Idelchik (Vice President of Advanced Technologies, GE Global Research), Mark Hutchinson (CEO of GE Europe) and Oded Meirav (Manager of Israel Technology Center, GE Global Research) discussed GE’s future in the Israeli tech ecosystem, and their reasoning for choosing the Commonwealth as the home for its new global headquarters.

While the delegation was still in Israel, Be'er Sheva, Israel-based cybersecurity company Morphisec announced that it would headquarter its U.S. operations in Massachusetts. Garnering accolades for its forward-thinking technology that masks corporate memory systems rather than adding layers of digital defense, the startup called Boston “an innovation hub” and the ideal location for it to “put down U.S. roots and set the stage for further growth.”

Other highlights from the Mission:

- Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a leader in project-based education, announced a new project center in Israel during the US-Israel Growth Summit, formalizing a growing collaboration focused on innovation in the STEM fields;

- Governor Baker met with cutting-edge cybersecurity firm Team8 executives, touring their facility and learning about how Israel is leading in the field;

- Governor Baker and members of Massachusetts’ digital health cluster met with Sheba Medical Center’s leadership team, learning about their training programs and touring the medical simulation center; and

- Visiting MassChallenge Israel, the most recent expansion of the Boston-founded startup accelerator.

The delegation included nearly 40 private sector partners, and members of the Baker-Polito Administration, including Assistant Secretary of Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship Katie Stebbins, Health Connector Executive Director Louis Gutierrez, MassIT Executive Director Mark Nunnelly and Senior Advisor for Anti-Terrorism and Cyber Security, Han Olsen. The administration partnered with the New England Israel Business Council (NEIBC), with the support of Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) to host the mission at no cost to taxpayers.

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