

In Israel, I attended a Jewish Federations of North America leadership summit with representatives of 30 Jewish Federations across the country to study several areas of importance to North American Jewish communities:

- American-Israel relations with our current administration
- philanthropy in Israel (both American and Israeli)
- religious pluralism
- social cohesion
- high tech entrepreneurialism

My colleagues and I met with a variety of leaders from the foreign ministry, journalists and members of Knesset focusing on strategic initiatives to maintain a strong connection between American Jews and Israel. Since the Iran agreement last year, there has been a noticeable difference in this connection. So much so that in many conversations, we were questioned about our concern for Israel's safety. We did also discuss religious pluralism, the treatment of minorities and education.

Here in Omaha we send 28% of our campaign dollars raised to Israel and to Jewish communities in need around the world. We do this through the Jewish Federations of North America, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Joint Distribution Committee and ORT. North American Jewry supports a great deal of social welfare and community projects. Many hours are spent determining how the dollars are allocated, how impact is measured, and accountability for that support. Most Israelis have participated in *zedakah* since they were children and now there is a growing interest in institutional philanthropy as well. Several Israeli entrepreneurs presented their newly created model of giving – working to solve community issues collectively and in partnership with the government. As you may know, it has long been the belief in Israel that the government should take care of certain societal issues. With what may prove to be the largest impact, Israelis are learning from Americans how meaningful and important giving back can be.

Feel free to call or email me with any questions.