

Measure Passes to Prevent Fraudulent Use of Israel's Red Crystal Emblem

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Rothman Helps Pass Measure to Prevent Fraudulent Use of Israel's Red Crystal Emblem

(Washington, DC)— Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) proudly voted for the Geneva Distinctive Emblems Protection Act, legislation to update U.S. law so that it provides the same protection for the Red Crystal and Red Crescent emblems that it provides for the Red Cross. The bill, which Rothman co-sponsored, passed the House of Representatives unanimously by voice vote.

Rothman said: "For decades, the United States and American Red Cross worked for Israel's Magen David Adom Society (MDA) to be admitted to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. When the MDA was finally admitted this June, I was ecstatic. However, our work is not over. Now, we must update U.S. law to ensure that the symbol Israel's relief workers will use for protection, the Red Crystal, is not defamed or misused in any way. Respect for the emblem - and in turn the safety of MDA's volunteers - depends on its uncompromised integrity."

The Red Crystal, Red Crescent and Red Cross are international symbols used by medical and humanitarian workers to show their neutrality during conflicts, thus protecting them from violence as they provide aid to civilians. The Red Crystal emblem is worn by volunteers with the Magen David Adom Society, the State of Israel's official state emergency relief and humanitarian aid organization since 1950.

Current law provides protection for and criminal penalties against misuse of the Red Cross emblem. However, no such law exists for the Red Crystal or the Red Crescent. The Geneva Distinctive Emblems Protection Act is a first step toward remedying this inequality. In order for this bill to reach the President's desk and become law, the U.S. Senate must vote and approve it before the 109th Congress adjourns, which is expected later this week.

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