In fact, the strong relationship between our two countries dates back to Israel's very founding.

Within eleven minutes of Israel's declaration of Independence, President Harry Truman formally recognized the new nation and established America as Israel's first and closest friend.

Today, the strong partnership between our two countries continues through commerce, educational links, familial ties, and joint efforts to stabilize and bring peace to the Middle East.

So as we mark this important date and pay tribute to Israel's founding, let us also recommit to a continued friendship and partnership with Israel and a renewed dedication to securing a lasting peace in the Middle East.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS BY OUR FRIEND AND ALLY ISRAEL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel, I am proud that the United States and Israel have built a strong, unique, and special relationship.

It took the United States, under President Harry Truman's leadership, only 11 minutes after Israel had been declared a state to officially welcome her into the community of nations. After, President Truman said, ''I had faith in Israel before it was established, I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it—not just another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization.''

The creation of the State of Israel was a bold step in May of 1948. The first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, once said that ''courage is a special kind of knowledge: the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared.'' It is from such courage that the State of Israel was formed and from which Israel continues to maintain its vibrant and strong democracy today. We can all learn examples from the struggles that the citizens have endured and the grief they have overcome to remain a democratic outpost in the Middle East.

The achievements of the Israeli people and their government over the past 60 years are remarkable. For instance, when it comes to education, well over half of Israelis aged 20-24 are enrolled in one of the country's institutions of post-secondary or higher education. Healthcare is guaranteed by law—for all Israelis—from infancy to old age. As for agriculture, the country produces almost 70 percent of its food requirements—from land that was once not remotely capable of sustaining crops or livestock. Finally, despite the growing demand for expansion of farmland and industrial centers, the Israeli government has set aside land for 150 nature reserves and 65 national parks throughout the country, with several hundred additional sites in planning. While these achievements are each remarkable in their own right, they are only a sample of what Israel has accomplished in a mere 60 years.

As a lifelong supporter of our most important ally in the Middle East, I have had the pleasure of traveling to Israel. These visits have only reinforced my strong conviction that Israel, like all states in the world, has the right to respond in self-defense to protect her sovereignty and citizens.

As chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations Special Intelligence Oversight Panel, I know that Israel has been a loyal and cooperative partner in combating terrorism. Our country has a lot to learn from Israel and her experiences with acts of terrorism.

As Israel continues to face threats from her neighbors, America must continue to stand with her. Additionally, a strong American relationship with Israel is essential for regional stability. We have a responsibility to help Israel stand up to and prevent terrorist attacks. Last year, I supported $2.4 billion in military assistance for Israel, and will continue to support additional U.S. foreign assistance for Israel.

I also strongly believe that the United States must remain actively engaged in ensuring a peaceful settlement of the current conflict between the two parties.

It is essential that the United States become more involved diplomatically to help diffuse conflicts like the one in Lebanon two summers ago and help move the parties to a broader settlement that will defang the militant and terrorist factions and will result in a peaceful Middle East and a viable two states.

Much work remains unfinished. We are all troubled by the daily rocket attacks by Hamas from Gaza against innocent civilians in Israel. Israel clearly has a right to defend herself against these deadly attacks. This has been yet another unique year for Israel, full of challenges that were admirably met.

I am pleased to join with the Jewish community of New Jersey and all Americans in celebrating 60 years of Israel's existence as a beacon of democracy and hope in the Middle East. I look forward to future anniversaries, and to the day when Israel and her citizens can live in peace without fear.

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS RECEIPT CLARIFICATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for H.R. 4008, the Credit and Debit Card Receipt Clarification Act. This is common sense legislation that will free hundreds of businesses, from large corporations to ''mom & pop'' operations from legal damages that could total hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars for their harmless failure to redact expiration dates from their credit and debit card receipts.

This bill only provides relief to companies that otherwise complied with the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act, also known as FACTA, it preserves the right for a customer to sue if real harm or fraud has occurred and it does not eliminate a business's obligation to properly truncate the account number or to redact the expiration date from its receipts.

I think it is important to point out that we are talking about businesses that did everything they thought they were required to do to comply with the new standards set forth by FACTA. These are businesses that purchased new machines, installed new hardware and incurred the expense of producing what they thought or were told was a compliant credit or debit card receipt. These are businesses that when they were told that they had to truncate the account numbers of credit and debit cards, they did so.

One of my constituents, Steven Hanson, is such a business owner. He is the founder and President of B.R. Guest Restaurants. After FACTA was enacted into law, Steve tells me that he and his company spent more than $300,000 switching out credit card terminals in his restaurant to comply with the new law, only to find out that each and every new receipt he processed could result in a $100 to $1,000 fine. Steve tells me that B.R. Guest has a pending lawsuit against his company that could result in a $100 million liability. This is not a liability that B.R. Guest or many businesses could absorb. Without this relief, B.R. Guest and hundreds of other businesses could be forced to close up shop.

In addition to B.R. Guest Restaurants, Zabars, Fairway Markets, Scholastic Books, Barneys/Jones Apparel Group, Estee Lauder, The Knot.com, Bally's North America, Buy Buy Baby and Ross Stores are among the New York Businesses named in similar lawsuits.

It is also important to note that while the lawsuits filed against these companies are seeking damages totaling in the hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, none of the 500 lawsuits that have been filed, make any allegation of consumer harm. Identity theft prevention experts have testified that the truncation of the credit card numbers accomplishes the intent of the statute because a potential fraudster would not be able to perpetrate account fraud without having the entire correct credit card number. The real harm to the consumer would come if Congress does not act. Consumers will be forced to pay higher prices to help these businesses absorb the cost of these lawsuits or will be faced with fewer options as businesses are forced out of business because they can not afford their cost.

This legislation enjoys wide bipartisan support and has been endorsed by The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Restaurant Association, Retail Industry Leaders Association, The National Association of Theater Owners, The International Franchise Association, The National Council of Chain Restaurants and the Food Marketing Institute.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is common sense legislation and I urge its adoption.