Washington, DC (September 22, 2011) – Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, released the following statement in opposition to a United Nations vote to recognize an independent Palestinian state:

"We must stand by Israel during this tumultuous time in the Middle East and insist on a resolution that allows Israel to exist in peace as a Jewish state. Any two-state solution must be one that requires Hamas to renounce violence, accept Israel's right to exist, and accept prior agreements made by the Palestinians.

"The fate of a Palestinian state should not be in the hands of the United Nations or any other international entity. That fate alone belongs to the two parties. The Palestinian Authority must negotiate directly with the State of Israel in order to seek a mutually agreed upon resolution."