

THE WEEKLY PRINT

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JULY 26, 2021

Jim Clyburn heads to Cleveland

The House majority whip spoke with JI as he prepares for a weekend of campaigning in Ohio's heated special election

By Matthew Kassel

With just over one week remaining until the closely watched special election in Ohio's 11th Congressional District, prominent Democratic lawmakers are descending on the Cleveland area as the race that has come to represent a high-stakes showdown between moderates and progressives enters the final stretch.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) visited the district on Saturday, drumming up support for Nina Turner, a former Ohio state senator and staunch progressive who had been leading the Democratic primary field in recent months. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), for whom Turner worked as a 2020 presidential campaign surrogate, is expected to make an appearance next weekend.

So, too, is Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-SC), the powerful House majority whip who will be campaigning for Shontel Brown, a Democratic Party establishment favorite and a Cuyahoga County party chair, before voters head to the polls on August 3. The South Carolina congressman, 81, endorsed Brown in late June, upping the ante of an election that is largely split along generational as well as ideological lines.

Brown had been trailing Turner before Clyburn backed her. "When I first got the

frantic call, they told me she was polling at about 15, 20%," the South Carolina congressman said in an interview with *Jewish Insider* on Friday. "If it means anything," he recalled concluding, "it means I need to up my involvement, and so I think that's why I did."

Since then, Brown has been gaining momentum, with additional support from outside independent expenditures as well new endorsements from pro-Israel Democrats in Congress. Earlier this month, the influential political arm of the Congressional Black Caucus threw its support behind Brown, who, like Turner, is Black.

"I was pleased that they did," Clyburn, who is a member of the CBC, remarked, while adding that he had no involvement in the endorsement process because he does not sit on the PAC's board. "I didn't play a role in it."

Either way, Clyburn's high-profile endorsement seems to have opened up a plausible path to victory for his preferred candidate in the final weeks of the race. A mid-July survey commissioned by Democratic Majority for Israel, which is backing Brown, put the Democratic congressional hopeful at 36% among likely voters, just five points behind Turner. An

independent poll from early July, conducted by TargetPoint Consulting, had both candidates tied at 33%.

Clyburn, who is credited with clinching the nomination for President Joe Biden in last year's presidential primaries, expressed optimism that his endorsement of Brown would have a similar impact. "I hope so," he told JI. "I also hope that people know that she is a good person who would make a great congressperson."

"I've always found her very pleasant to work with," said Clyburn, adding that he had campaigned with Brown in previous races. "I've been involved with her for some time now," he noted. "This is not my first involvement."

The 15-term representative, who has locked horns with the far left over issues like defunding the police and Medicare for All, rejected calls that he stay out of the open-seat race to succeed former Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH), now secretary of housing and urban development in the Biden administration.

"I saw something the other day from one of Ms. Turner's supporters saying I need to stay out of their district," Clyburn told JI, referring to comments made by Juanita Brent, an Ohio state representative who is supporting Turner. "But the same person

welcomed Bernie Sanders into the district. I want her to explain to me why — what's the difference — why I cannot be — this Black guy who's been coming in and out of that district for 25 or 30 years — since Arnold Pinkney ran Carl Stokes's campaign?"

"She says to me I should stay out of the district and then she welcomes Bernie Sanders into the district," Clyburn repeated. "Somebody's got to explain that to me."

Brent and the Turner campaign did not respond to requests for comment.

While Clyburn has emphasized that he simply favors Brown over Turner, other dynamics also appear to be at play as the race has taken something of a nasty turn in recent weeks. Last month, Turner appeared at a town hall at which the rapper Killer Mike described Clyburn as "stupid" for endorsing Biden last cycle.

"I think it's incredibly stupid to not cut a deal before you get someone elected president and the only thing you get is a federal holiday and nothing tangible out of it," the rapper said, referring to the newly adopted Juneteenth holiday. "You can talk about it," Turner said, nodding in agreement.

Clyburn stepped into the race shortly after the event. "They called me dumb," he said, taking the insult in stride. "I smiled and said, well, I was called dumb or stupid."

Still, he couldn't help offering his own sharply worded retort in the interview with JI. "I understand that Nina said, when I endorsed Joe Biden, she said I was going to be made to pay for that," Clyburn said. "I'd like to know how I'm going to get paid."

"I don't know why it's necessary for all this acrimony to exist," Clyburn said. "Just be who you are and let other people do what they want to do. I just think it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to make these kinds of inflammatory statements. I don't do it."

Clyburn demurred, however, when asked whether he envisioned collaborating with Turner if she wins the election. "That would be up to her," he said. "I work very well with Bernie Sanders. I endorsed Joe Biden, and it didn't stop me from working with Bernie Sanders. I do."

The majority-Black 11th district is home to a sizable Jewish community, support from which has been building for Brown. The first-time congressional candidate is actively engaged in Jewish outreach, and

has earned support from groups like the Jewish Democratic Council of America, Pro-Israel America and DMFI.

Brown's views on Israel align with the mainstream Democratic wing of the party, while Turner argues in favor of conditioning aid to the Jewish state.

Clyburn said the candidates' contrasting foreign policy approaches also factored into his endorsement. "I think Shontel would be a moderating voice," the congressman said, in House disputes over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which have become increasingly contentious following May's violent conflict in Gaza.

"My view when it comes to foreign aid is that no two requests are the same," he said, "and I think that all requests ought to be based upon existing relationships as well as future consideration for whatever the relationship might be."

"I think that this country and its allies have got to really be very, very careful in its national and international relationships," Clyburn said. "This so-called rightward movement that seemed to be taking hold in this country is not limited to this country. We see this stuff popping up all around the world, and so the interest that we have in maintaining the forward movement in this country toward a more perfect union and in Israel to a peaceful and secure existence in the Middle East — these are interests that ought to be complementing each other and ought not to be competing against each other."

"It's important for us to make sure that we maintain those relationships politically and personally," he added.

Clyburn characterized himself as a Truman Democrat. "It was Truman that recognized Israel, and he did so against some pretty forceful advice, just like he integrated the armed services against some pretty forceful advice," he said.

"I grew up in a Christian parsonage, and my father was a fundamentalist minister," Clyburn said. "I tell people all the time, my dad preached as much, let's say as often, from the Old Testament as he did from the New Testament, and I grew up with a healthy respect for the Jewish faith."

The congressman had yet to see a finalized campaign schedule when he spoke with JI. But he said his plans for the

upcoming weekend in Cleveland include meeting with faith leaders as well as Black fraternities and sororities in the district. He was also tailoring his schedule, he said, to accommodate Jewish community members and Seventh-day Adventists who observe the Sabbath on Saturdays.

"I'm very sensitive about that," he noted.♦

The young crypto billionaire who wants to change political fundraising

Sam Bankman-Fried wants to give all his money away. He thinks other wealthy people should too.

By Gabby Deutch

Think of the biggest donors to U.S. political campaigns and candidates, and you might imagine hedge fund magnates or septuagenarian titans of business, dressed perhaps in bespoke suits and designer ties.

But among the top donors during the 2020 election cycle, one name stands out — Sam Bankman-Fried, a 29-year-old MIT graduate who prefers casual T-shirts and has been known to sleep in a beanbag chair. He also made billions in the cryptocurrency industry. Bankman-Fried's first-ever political donation was less than two months before last year's election, a \$350,000 gift to Vote Tripling PAC, a group that spent millions to encourage people to bring a friend to the polls.

He then went on to give a total of \$5.6 million in the following eight weeks, making him one of the 50 largest disclosed political donors of the 2020 cycle. (Other donors who gave through undisclosed means did not appear on the list, which was calculated by OpenSecrets.) The bulk of that money — \$5 million — went to Future Forward USA, a super PAC affiliated with Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz. The organization made a whopping nine-figure ad buy in support of now-President Joe Biden in the days before the November 2020 election.

Now, Bankman-Fried is bankrolling a political project called Guarding Against Pandemics, which is lobbying members of Congress to support \$30 billion in pandemic prevention funding in Biden's infrastructure bill. His brother Gabriel Bankman-Fried, who runs the organization, told *Punchbowl News* that the organization plans to spend at least \$128,000 on TV and digital ads in the Washington region.

So why does Bankman-Fried's political

giving matter?

In the rapidly growing cryptocurrency industry, Bankman-Fried is among the first crypto entrepreneurs to get involved in U.S. politics at such a large scale. His company, FTX, is one of the world's fastest-growing cryptocurrency exchanges, processing nearly \$11 billion in trades a day. Bankman-Fried's net worth is estimated to be just shy of \$9 billion.

"The place I could be most useful to [President Biden] is — I don't think Biden's ever going to put much thought into it — but if [the administration] is ever looking for, like, an expert on crypto regulation," Bankman-Fried, who lives in Hong Kong, told *Vox* in March.

Bankman-Fried grew up in the Bay Area, and his parents are both professors at Stanford Law School. His father, Joseph Bankman, is an expert in tax law, and his mother, Barbara Fried, studies law, economics and philosophy.

Fried also runs an organization called Mind the Gap, a political-giving network comprised of Silicon Valley billionaires that makes the case for the efficacy of political giving. It measures the potential impact of each dollar spent on the chances that Democrats might win control of the U.S. House of Representatives or win the presidency. Bankman-Fried has been involved with the group.

Bankman-Fried also buys into the philosophy of effective altruism, which uses "evidence and reason to figure out how to benefit others as much as possible," according to the Centre for Effective Altruism. (Bankman-Fried briefly worked at the nonprofit following a stint at Jane Street Capital and before launching his first company, Alameda Research.)

As an effective altruist, Bankman-Fried's

goal "is just to find out how I can do the most good," he told *Vox*. "And I had a long list of things to look at, at least briefly. And politics has always been on that list, and I've been fairly skeptical of it."

His plan, he said, is to give away all of his money in his lifetime. Other causes he supports include animal welfare and nuclear threat reduction.

He is skeptical of other billionaires who give large sums to political causes because he thinks they can give more: "The thought of being someone who has \$50 billion of completely liquid wealth that's just been sitting there for years and you don't find anything to do with \$100 million of it in a big moment? That's obviously an enormous amount for most people. But for some people in the country, that's a rounding error," he said.

Still, Bankman-Fried has no intentions of becoming a talking head or making politics a long-term cause. He told *New York* magazine that, depending on who runs, he could sit 2024 out: "If someone and their twin are running against each other," he said, referring to two ideologically similar candidates, "whatever, may the best twin win. Obviously, it's going to depend a lot on the details." He has not made any political contributions since October. ♦

An early test of Trump's clout in Ohio special election

Trump-backed coal lobbyist Mike Carey leads the GOP field, but in a crowded, off-year primary, will results be more than just statistical noise?

By Matthew Kassel

In some ways, the special election next Tuesday in Ohio's deep-red 15th Congressional District has come to be viewed as an early test of former President Donald Trump's prevailing influence within the GOP.

The crowded Republican primary in the suburbs of southern Columbus is pitting a Trump-backed former energy lobbyist, Mike Carey, against Jeff LaRe, a state legislator endorsed by the moderate former incumbent, Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH), who vacated his seat in mid-May to lead the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Media reports are billing the race as a matchup between the Trump-aligned faction of the GOP and its establishment wing — one that could have implications in the 2022 midterms as the former president, who has yet to announce whether he will run again for a second term, prepares to seek vengeance against the handful of House Republicans who voted to impeach him last February after the violent Capitol riot.

The Trump wing so far appears to have the edge, even as the former president suffered a stinging rebuke last night in Texas's 6th Congressional District runoff. Susan Wright, a Republican primary candidate vying to succeed her late husband with an endorsement from Trump, was defeated by state Rep. Jake Ellzey in a matchup that had also been characterized as a barometer of the former president's political clout.

The 15th district race represents the next case study. Carey, a 50-year-old former executive at American Consolidated Natural Resources, has raked in more than \$460,000 since May, outraising every candidate in the field, according to filings from the Federal Election Commission. Meanwhile, a June poll commissioned by Carey's campaign

put him well ahead of his opponents even with just 20% of the vote — a number that jumped to 52% when voters were informed of Trump's endorsement.

"Donald Trump is the Republican Party in the 15th Congressional District," Carey boasted in a recent interview with *Jewish Insider*, "and anybody who thinks otherwise is just — they're not talking to the voters that I'm talking to."

LaRe, who placed second in Carey's poll — the only publicly available survey on the race — made sure to note that he agreed with Trump's policies in an interview with JI earlier this month, mindful not to alienate supporters of the former president who are likely to turn out on Election Day. But the 45-year-old state lawmaker, a former deputy sheriff and a longtime security industry executive at the Whitestone Group, was eager to emphasize that he is running his own race.

"I'm certainly honored to have the endorsement and support of Steve Stivers, but at the end of the day, I'm Jeff LaRe," said the congressional hopeful, whose candidacy has been buoyed by hundreds of thousands of dollars left over from Stivers's campaign war chest. LaRe has otherwise raised approximately \$240,000 through mid-July. "There are real people in this race, and I think that's what it comes down to, is getting my message out, letting people know who I am and what I stand for," he told JI. "I mean, there's only one Steve Stivers and there's only one Donald Trump."

Still, Trump seems to exert more sway over GOP voters in the district. Experts who spoke with JI agree that Carey is operating at an advantage as he heads into the final stretch, despite his status as a first-time congressional candidate with low name recognition. But with 11 Republicans angling

for the seat, the primary — whose victor will be all but assured safe passage in the general election — has nevertheless proven difficult to forecast.

"It's an odd contest to have to try to handicap," said Paul Beck, a professor emeritus of political science at The Ohio State University, who believes that Carey and LaRe are leading the pack. But the primary may be more competitive than is immediately apparent, he adds, because of the wide assortment of candidates, none of whom are particularly well-known, all jockeying for support during an off-cycle special election in the dog days of summer — when turnout is expected to be significantly lower than usual.

The race hasn't predictably unfolded along intraparty lines, either, suggesting that the Republican voting share could be parceled out among several candidates, with whomever prevails earning only a small plurality in the winner-take-all primary. Notably, some prominent out-of-state Republicans wading into the open-seat contest have clearly indicated that they won't be falling in line behind Carey, who appears to have earned his high-profile endorsement thanks in part to a relationship with Corey Lewandowski, a former Trump campaign manager.

While Carey earned the backing of Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY), an ardent Trump supporter, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) is endorsing Ron Hood, a former Ohio state representative. The Kentucky senator's father, former Texas congressman and prominent libertarian Ron Paul, endorsed Hood in 2010 when he ran for a House seat in Ohio's 18th district.

Having pulled in just \$156,000, Hood's campaign is being aggressively promoted by outside spending from a political action

committee affiliated with Rand Paul. The libertarian Protect Freedom PAC has put up a staggering \$640,000 in support of Hood, and on Monday, FEC filings revealed that the Conservative Outsider PAC — which has previously received funding from Protect Freedom — spent nearly \$220,000 on negative TV ads targeting Carey.

Further unsettling the race, Debbie Meadows — the conservative activist who is married to Trump's former White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows — has thrown her weight behind Ruth Edmonds, a Black minister and former Columbus NAACP president.

Though Edmonds has only raised \$162,000, she expressed confidence about her prospects in a recent statement to JI. "I am humbled from the outpouring of support from the thousands of like-minded Patriots who want to end the Left's lie on race and send someone to Washington who [can] effectively challenge and defeat AOC and Nancy Pelosi," she said, using a popular shorthand for Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY).

The conflicting endorsements — and significant overlapping expenditures — seem to have caused tension within Trump's ranks. Right Women PAC, which is founded by Meadows and has supported such Trumpian provocateurs as Reps. Lauren Boebert (R-CO) and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), seems to have recently scrubbed its social media accounts of pro-Edmonds content, though an endorsement remains on its website. (Right Women PAC did not respond to a request for comment regarding the discrepancy.)

Still other candidates have complicated the dynamics of the jam-packed race, threatening to peel support from Trump's pick. Bob Peterson, an Ohio state senator who has raised an impressive \$455,000, closely trailing Carey, while personally loaning his campaign an extra \$100,000, picked up an endorsement from Ohio Right to Life, an anti-abortion advocacy group in Columbus. The seal of approval is likely to be meaningful among evangelical voters in the district.

And state Sen. Stephanie Kunze has earned backing from the Franklin County Republican Party — suggesting that party leaders are divided at the local level, even

as both Stivers and Trump have made their preferences known.

Trump, who remains popular in Ohio, seems at least partially invested in ensuring voters are aware of his endorsement in the special election. He invited Carey to address the crowd at a late-June rally in the Buckeye State — albeit outside of the district — and earlier this month spoke at a telephone town hall hosted by Carey, who, for his part, is playing up support from the former president on his campaign website and in advertising.

On Tuesday, Trump released a statement regarding his endorsement. "Numerous candidates in the Great State of Ohio, running in Congressional District 15, are saying that I am supporting them, when in actuality, I don't know them, and don't even know who they are," the former president said. "But I do know who Mike Carey is—I know a lot about him, and it is all good. Mike Carey is the only one who has my Endorsement and he's the one I feel will do the best job for Ohio, and for the United States. Please vote for Mike Carey next Tuesday, and let there be no further doubt who I have Endorsed!"

In conversation with JI, the Trump-backed Republican said he is looking favorably at his odds. "If I had to have one endorsement in this race, definitely President Trump's endorsement is the best," Carey posited, while emphasizing that the former president's nod isn't a license for complacency.

"The president called me last night, and he said, 'Mike, you gotta run like you're one point down,' and I said, 'Mr. President, I'm running like I'm 10 points down,'" Carey elaborated. "This is a special election and it's about voter turnout and it's about people coming to the polls. You know, most people on the 3rd of August aren't really thinking of an election. So you really gotta just motivate the people."

The Ohio-born former coal lobbyist, whom *Politico* once described as "a one-man wrecking ball for Democrats who have strayed too far green for voters' liking," said he decided to run for office out of a conviction that his policy experience and negotiating skills would be better wielded within the halls of Congress. "The one thing I've seen over the last few years is that Republicans in

many cases seem to have lost their way," he told JI. "I think that's partially because you have career politicians that continually seek to go to elected office."

Casting himself as a fiscal conservative, Carey harkened back to the Contract with America, the legislative agenda put forth by the GOP in the 1994 midterms. "We simply laid out these are the things that we as Republicans will do if you give us control of the House," he recalled. "I would advocate that we need to do that again. I support a balanced budget amendment. I think it's very important. I think we wouldn't have the issues that we have today if the Senate had approved the balanced budget that the House passed back in 1995."

"People are tired of looking at the crisis that we have at the border, not only the humanitarian crisis but the drug crisis that we're seeing coming into this country," Carey added, rattling off a list of issues he said voters have brought up on the trail. "I think people are a little bit fed up of what they're seeing from the liberals in Congress, with the new Green Deal and the bloated infrastructure package that is just completely all out of sorts."

LaRe hewed to similar talking points in the interview with JI, though he was quick to position himself first and foremost as a public safety advocate given his career in private security contracting. "When I look at what's going on not only here in Ohio but across our country, it's concerning," he said, "and it really comes down to safety for me."

"When people are destructive and violent, we all suffer as a community, and this mindset of defunding the police is the exact opposite approach of what we need right now," LaRe said, adding: "When we want to talk about police reform, there's certainly areas for improvement, but my concern is that we're not going to be able to attract the men and women that we want in that profession unless we give them the support that they so desperately need right now."

The two candidates, who refrained from directly criticizing one another, both cast themselves as outsiders in no way representative of the much-maligned "career politician." They also both extolled Trump's "America first" agenda while warning of the dangers of critical race theory, which

has become something of right-wing boogeyman in recent months.

“Critical race theory being taught in our schools is a big issue, and certainly, I think, this whole cancel culture that you’re seeing just across the country,” said Carey. “The whole decision by Ben & Jerry’s to stop selling ice cream in the West Bank — that is just insane. This anti-Israel decision just sets a very dangerous standard,” he added. “I want to make sure that nobody eats Ben & Jerry’s ice cream anywhere near me.”

Carey expressed an affinity for Israel that he credits in large part to his experience growing up in a Catholic and Jewish home during the first 10 years of his childhood, while also attending Jewish day school. “I learned to respect the Jewish culture and the religion, and I think that’s why you’re going to find that I am so committed to these Israeli issues and committed to Israel, because it was one of the founding building blocks of my life,” he said. “These are very personal issues.”

“With this rise of antisemitism and the ridiculous boycotting,” he added, “the prime minister and Israel need our support now more than ever.”

The GOP contender vowed to build on the Trump administration’s Middle East foreign policy agenda, which included moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, exiting the Iran nuclear deal and brokering the Abraham Accords between Israel and a number of Arab nations. He argued that voters in the 15th district would be hard-pressed to find “any better friend to Israel than me,” notwithstanding an admission that he has never visited the Jewish state. “I think people need to understand that if you want a fighter who’s going to go to D.C. and advocate on the issues of Israel,” he said, “I’m the best candidate suited in this race to do that.”

LaRe, for his part, also touted his support for Israel, despite being significantly less boastful than his opponent, calling for an expansion of the Abraham Accords while denouncing Iran. “The Biden administration and Nancy Pelosi, the fact that they would even consider trusting Iran is absolutely absurd,” he charged. “We’ve got to do everything we possibly can to make sure that they don’t have nuclear capabilities.”

“You’ll hear people say, you know, we’re

not the world’s police, but we need to support Israel and their fight against terrorism,” he said, arguing that international conflicts can have ripple effects on the domestic front. “In my position as an executive in the security industry, oftentimes we work with the Jewish community because the things that happen in Israel or overseas,” he added, “affect the Jewish community right here at home.”

The Jewish community in the district, which makes up a population of 4,500, according to a definitive 2014 survey, doesn’t appear to be rallying behind one particular candidate — underscoring the primary’s somewhat fractured state. Still, observers say this dynamic exists because most of the viable contenders in the expansive field have all earned positive reviews from Jewish activists.

Brad Kastan, a Jewish leader and pro-Israel advocate in Columbus, is familiar with the candidates’ outreach and backgrounds as they pertain to the Jewish community. Kunze and Peterson, he noted, have both traveled to Israel “and been very helpful to the central Ohio Jewish community on many fronts.” Edmonds “has gone out of her way to reach out to the community,” he added, noting that she recently attended Shabbat services at a Columbus synagogue. “Nearly all of the candidates have met with AIPAC staff and lay leaders and have very strong pro-Israel views,” said Kastan, a co-chair of the Jewish Community Relations Committee in Columbus.

“It’s a bumper crop of great candidates who know our community issues and have worked with our community’s leaders,” said Howie Beigelman, the executive director of the nonprofit Ohio Jewish Communities, which represents the state’s eight Jewish federations.

Unlike the upcoming Democratic primary in Ohio’s 11th congressional district, where the sizable Jewish community is coalescing behind one candidate who has emerged as the clear pro-Israel favorite, Jewish voters to the south largely aren’t choosing sides. Justin Shaw, the director of Jewish community relations at the nonprofit organization JewishColumbus, said he has heard of a number of Jewish Republicans who are donating to more than one candidate.

“Wherever we land, we’re going to be in a good position from a Jewish community perspective,” he told JI.

Whether the winner will be Carey, LaRe or another candidate altogether may point to the direction of the Republican Party in future elections, as Trump’s will is put to the test. But because of the mitigating circumstances of the somewhat low-profile race, experts advised against overinterpretation.

“There might be some tea leaves, but I would be a bit cautious in reading too much into the results,” Nathaniel Swigger, an associate professor of political science at The Ohio State University at Newark, told JI. “If one of the candidates wins in a landslide that might tell us something,” he added, “but anything short of that really could just indicate a bunch of statistical noise.” ♦

JULY 26, 2021

PayPal teams up with ADL to research, root out extremists, hate movements

The Anti-Defamation League plans to share data with other financial institutions, policymakers, law enforcement

By Marc Rod

Payment processing giant PayPal announced today that it is partnering with the Anti-Defamation League on a project to examine how extremists and hate groups use financial platforms to fund criminal activity and root out bad actors, *Jewish Insider* has learned. The data gathered will be shared with others in the financial industry as well as lawmakers, law enforcement and other civil rights groups.

ADL's Center on Extremism will lead the program aimed at "uncovering and disrupting the financial pipelines that support extremist and hate movements," according to a joint ADL/PayPal statement. The initiative will focus on white supremacists, anti-government organizations and those propagating and profiting from antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant, anti-Black, anti-Hispanic and anti-Asian hate.

"By identifying partners across sectors with common goals and complementary resources, we can make an even greater impact than any of us could do on our own," Aaron Karczmer, PayPal's chief risk officer and executive vice president of risk and platforms, said in a statement. "We are excited to partner with the ADL, other nonprofits and law enforcement in our fight against hate in all its forms."

ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt characterized this as a new breakthrough in corporate social responsibility efforts.

"All of us, including in the private sector, have a critical role to play in fighting the spread of extremism and hate. With this new initiative, we're setting a new standard for companies to bring their expertise to critical social issues," Greenblatt said in a statement. "We have a unique opportunity to further understand how hate spreads and develop key insights that will inform the efforts of the financial industry, law enforcement, and

our communities in mitigating extremist threats."

The new initiative — which comes amid a nationwide spike in antisemitic and anti-Asian hate crimes and as the Biden administration steps up its efforts to combat domestic extremism — also already has backing from influential figures within government.

"I applaud PayPal and the Anti-Defamation League for joining forces to combat hate and extremist movements who seek to utilize financial platforms to bankroll their criminal activities and profit from the spread of racism and bigotry," outgoing Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. said in a statement. "My Office stands ready to assist financial institutions and businesses of all kinds in this urgent fight to stop hate and protect members of historically marginalized communities." ♦

JULY 29, 2021

Jewish leaders give mixed reviews of Madison Cawthorn's antisemitism resolution

The Republican congressman introduced the resolution following a meeting with Jewish community members last February

By Matthew Kassel

Freshman Rep. Madison Cawthorn (R-NC) began his first term in Congress earlier this year on uneasy footing with Jewish leaders in his district of western North Carolina. Even before assuming office, the

25-year-old political upstart had come in for criticism due to an old Instagram post in which he described Hitler as "the Führer" as well as an admission that he had tried to convert Jews to Christianity. Weeks after being sworn

in, the congressman drew further scrutiny when he invoked a poem about the Holocaust while hawking campaign merchandise on Twitter.

In February, after months of fraught planning, Cawthorn finally met with a

group of Jewish community leaders at his district office in Henderson County for a listening session in which they aired their concerns with his controversial rhetoric. Despite some tension, attendees largely emerged from the hour-long discussion with a sense of cautious optimism, characterizing the congressman as a careful and engaging listener notwithstanding his incendiary social media personality. At one point, a participant requested that he consider re-introducing a previously unpassed resolution addressing the rise in antisemitism, and Cawthorn asked a staffer to look into it.

The suggestion appears to have made an impact. On Tuesday, Cawthorn introduced a House resolution, co-sponsored by three Republican congressmen, condemning the uptick in anti-Jewish hatred that followed the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas. The GOP firebrand wastes no time identifying what he characterizes in the strongly worded resolution title as the “malignant and metastasizing ideology of antisemitism.” Further down, Cawthorn runs through a series of antisemitic tropes, including accusations of dual loyalty, while finally “rejecting the idea that Jews are some nefarious force controlling the world behind the scenes.”

The resolution also rejects “any moral equivalence between the United States and any regime that represses minorities, abuses its’ citizens, murders civilians” or withholds “inalienable rights.” And it singles out, among other things, “evil people” who “try to cloak antisemitism in criticism of the Israeli government.”

The charged language — perhaps weakened by more than one grammatical error — is in keeping with a private acknowledgement that Cawthorn has built his staff “around comms rather than legislation,” as he told GOP colleagues in an email at the beginning of his term. But more broadly, the resolution represents the continuation of a trend in which Republican lawmakers have combatively sought to drive a wedge between pro-Israel House Democrats and some far-left colleagues who have escalated their criticism of the Jewish state in recent months.

“I strongly condemn all acts of antisemitism, and have introduced this

legislation with my colleagues to shed light on the radically destructive statements and stances being advocated by some of my very own colleagues here in Washington,” Cawthorn said in a heated statement on Tuesday.

The North Carolina Republican was alluding, at least in part, to recent comments by Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), who came under fire last month when she appeared to equate the U.S. and Israel with Hamas and the Taliban. Her assertion was promptly condemned as “offensive” and “misguided” by a group of Jewish House Democrats.

But for Cawthorn, an evangelical Christian who casts himself as an ardent supporter of Israel, Democrats did not go nearly far enough in denouncing their fellow party member. “It is nothing short of shameful that only twelve Democrats possess the backbone to oppose antisemitic radicalism flowing from members of their own party,” he writes, without explicitly mentioning anyone by name.

Morton Klein, the president of the Zionist Organization of America, said in an interview with Jewish Insider that he believes Cawthorn’s decision to omit direct references to particular members of Congress is part of a strategy to shore up bipartisan support for the resolution. The pro-Israel activist was unaware of the resolution until Wednesday afternoon, when JI asked for comment.

But he expressed admiration for Cawthorn’s effort, noting that he was about to call the congressman’s office to discuss the resolution in further detail. “This is one the strongest resolutions against antisemitism that I’ve seen a member of Congress issue,” he said, arguing that Cawthorn’s decision to use the “powerful word evil in describing Jew hatred” was “especially important.”

Klein said he was already working to lure additional co-sponsors to the resolution, venturing there was a chance that a handful of Democrats would sign on.

Jewish leaders in Cawthorn’s home district, which includes the liberal redoubt of Asheville, offered somewhat more mixed reviews of the congressman’s resolution, which arrives at a moment when hate crimes in North Carolina have been on the rise. In the district last week, for instance, an antisemitic flyer was found attached

to a gas station pump at a convenience store in Fairview — a photo of which has been circulating via email among Jewish community members in the area. The flyer was reported to the Anti-Defamation League through its website form.

“When the group of us that met with Rep. Cawthorn talked with him back in February, the rise in antisemitism and security concerns was the topic of our entire meeting,” said Rochelle Reich, executive director at Congregation Beth Israel, an independent synagogue in Asheville, who was one of five Jewish leaders present at the meeting. “We spoke with him about our concerns — many of which are outlined in this resolution.”

Reich was unaware the resolution was in the works but emphasized that she was nevertheless pleased that Cawthorn seemed to have made an effort to address their concerns about antisemitism. “Legislation condemning it is certainly a start and I’m happy to see it introduced by our congressman,” she said. “Similar legislation has been introduced in years past, so it will be interesting to see if it will be passed this time.”

Still, she noted, the resolution suffered from one glaring omission — an actual plan on how to confront the problems associated with antisemitism. “This is concerning at best, but I also realize that it is a single step in a larger staircase,” Reich told JI.

Frank Goldsmith, a board member with the nonprofit advocacy group Carolina Jews for Justice who lives in the Asheville area, was less forgiving. “This resolution is political window-dressing,” he said bluntly in an email exchange with JI on Wednesday, after reading through the document for the first time. “It is not a serious attempt to legislate against antisemitism.”

Echoing Reich, Goldsmith argued that the resolution fails to put forth “any concrete measures to combat” anti-Jewish hatred, “such as education about how important antisemitism is to white supremacist ideology.” To be sure, he added, “antisemitism emanates from other sources as well,” including some Palestinian supporters “who falsely conflate Judaism and Israeli policy.”

But those attacks “are relatively rare and episodic, flaring up only when there is an

outbreak of armed conflict between Israel and Hamas,” Goldsmith contended. In the United States, he said, making a veiled dig at Cawthorn, “the principal, ongoing threat to Jews comes from white supremacists” as well as “politicians who, whether through overt praise or through subtle dog-whistles, encourage them.”

Ultimately, Goldsmith suggested he was viewing the resolution with a guarded sense of suspicion. “One suspects that the sponsors are merely seeking to curry favor with Jewish voters and supporters of Israel for their own political gain,” he said. “Indeed, the resolution is nakedly partisan in its aim, as revealed by the sponsors’ rants against Democrats in their accompanying tweets.”

“This is not serious policy-making,” he

concluded.

Micah Bock, a spokesperson for Cawthorn, defended the congressman’s efforts. “Rep. Cawthorn has been working on his antisemitism resolution for quite a while, a number of months,” he told JI in an email. “Rep. Cawthorn thinks that it is incredibly important to draw attention to a rising wave of hate-motivated violence targeting the Jewish community.”

“This resolution represents just one example of Rep. Cawthorn’s commitment to the Jewish community in NC-11,” Bock added, referring to North Carolina’s 11th Congressional District.

In a phone conversation on Wednesday afternoon, Bock said he would have to check — but did not follow up — when asked

about any further engagement Cawthorn had initiated with Jewish constituents in his district since the February meeting at which he seemed to have allayed some apprehensions over his past comments.

During the discussion this past winter, Cawthorn, who delivered sermons throughout North Carolina before he was elected to Congress, expressed a desire to attend services at a local synagogue — a level of interest one Jewish leader who spoke with JI at the time viewed as a positive sign.

But Cawthorn doesn’t yet appear to have acted on that impulse.

“No other outreach to me or anyone I know has taken place,” Rabbi Batsheva H. Meiri of Congregation Beth HaTephila, a Reform synagogue in Asheville, told JI. ♦

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Why Rabbi Daniel Nevins is leaving JTS for a day school

Nevins’ experience of the coronavirus pandemic motivated him to work with children

By Helen Chernikoff

As he approached 14 years as dean of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), Rabbi Daniel S. Nevins thought he would remain at the Manhattan school, the flagship institution of the Conservative movement, for the rest of his career — until the coronavirus pandemic. Nevins spoke with *eJewishPhilanthropy* about how his experiences during the coronavirus pandemic inspired soul-searching, followed by some job-hunting and finally the decision to start a new phase of his career — as the head of school at Golda Och Academy (GOA) in West Orange, N.J.

“Some people feel like 3080 Broadway [JTS’s address in Morningside Heights] is the center of the Jewish universe,” he acknowledged. “And JTS is a national organization.”

But the coronavirus pandemic caused him — and many other people — to reconsider his career path. Nevins had also

thought about going back to the pulpit, but the contrast between JTS’s remote learning program — which was suitable for adults — and the immersive experience offered by day schools struck him as especially compelling.

“Day schools were lifted up in my mind as the place where the most important Jewish identity formation was happening,” he said.

Raised in New Jersey and educated at Harvard University, Nevins received ordination from JTS in 1994. That same year, he took a job as a pulpit rabbi at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills, Mich., where he both taught at the local day school and helped to found a non-denominational Jewish community high school, the Frankel Jewish Academy.

His pastoral and scholarly abilities were very appealing to the hiring committee at GOA, said Rebecca Berman, one of the members.

“We were really moved by his intellectual heft and his menschlichkeit,” she said, using

the Yiddish word for humanity. One of his references, a colleague at JTS, was so moved as she described Nevins’s skill as a listener that she cried. Nevins is a member of the Conservative movement’s Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, and has written on the participation of Jews who are blind in the Torah service, electricity and Shabbat and artificial intelligence.

Nevins was content at Adat Shalom, yet when his predecessor, Rabbi William Lebeau, announced that he would retire as JTS’s dean in 2007, Nevins felt compelled by the opportunity to use what he’d learned as a congregational leader to have a wider impact on the movement by training its rabbis.

“One of my favorite parts about being a dean was helping my students apply for jobs,” Nevins said. “Year after year, like so many educators, I would see my students going back out into the world to start their service, and I started to wonder if I should get back out there, too.”

When Prizmah posted the job listing for the head of school position at GOA, a friend encouraged him to consider it. Nevins's predecessor, Adam Shapiro, had worked at GOA for 18 years, the final six as head of school.

Founded in 1965 as the Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union (counties in central New Jersey), GOA was part of the Conservative movement's network of Solomon Schechter day schools, most of which are now known by other names. In 2016, the Schechter Day School Network became part of Prizmah, a support organization created by the merging of five day school groups. GOA took the name Golda Och Academy in 2010 after receiving a \$15 million matching gift from the Jane and Daniel Och Family Foundation. Daniel Och is the founder and former CEO of Och-Ziff Capital Management Group in New York. Golda Och helped to found the school.

GOA draws students from outside its immediate area, and while the day school is rooted in the Conservative community, it also serves families who attend Reform and Orthodox synagogues, as well as those who are unaffiliated.

This ecumenical aspect of GOA's culture resonated with Nevins, who, when he first became involved with the project of creating a Jewish high school near his synagogue in Michigan, had assumed it would be a part of the Conservative movement. The 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shifted his thinking, however, and he decided that the community, at the time divided over the Rabin's death, would be better served by a non-denominational school that help provide a common ground despite such differences.

"A community day school can't please everyone, but what I like about Golda Och is that it has core values, like egalitarianism, but also serves people from across the community," he said.

The robust donor support GOA enjoys, from the Och family and others, was also a draw, Nevins said. In March, the Jane and Daniel Och Family Foundation donated another \$10 million matching gift. Nevins said he appreciates the family's interest in both faculty excellence and student support.

"We're looking to have many more types of learners flourish in the school," he added, including both students with disabilities,

and those with differences, such as an aptitude for visual versus oral learning.

The Och gift will also enable the school to raise faculty salaries, which is a need across the field of Jewish education, according to new research from the Collaborative for Applied Studies in Jewish Education.

"The idea is to have new models to reward outstanding pedagogy," said Nevins. "The faculty are involved in creating a new model for compensation."

Despite his long career in Jewish education, Nevins has not run a day school until now. He said his experience as JTS dean has equipped him to fill the role at GOA, in terms of the academic calendar, and in the work of bringing students into the institution, and then seeing them on their way in the world.

Nevins told the school during the hiring process that while he cares about college admissions, that would not be his primary focus.

"I'm going to be bringing a Jewish agenda," he said. "I'm going to intensify Jewish knowledge, Jewish practice and Jewish identity. That's at the core of my Jewish mission." ♦