

THE WEEKLY PRINT

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AUGUST 5, 2026

Jewish Dems 'disappointed' in Michigan Senate results, stop short of endorsing El-Sayed

AIPAC indicated it intends to remain engaged in the race, while the Anti-Defamation League raised concerns about El-Sayed's rhetoric and the acceptance of it

By Marc Rod

Jewish groups expressed concern on Wednesday about the victory of Abdul El-Sayed in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in Michigan, highlighting his extreme rhetoric on Israel and the broader rise of the far left.

Jewish Democratic Council of America CEO Halie Soifer said in a statement that the group was "disappointed" by the results of the primary, where the group had endorsed and campaigned strongly for Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI). She congratulated but stopped short of endorsing El-Sayed.

"While we are disappointed in the final result of the Michigan Senate race, the razor-thin margin isn't the resounding win for the far-left that was predicted," Soifer said. "We are proud of the race run by Rep. Haley Stevens, and we thank her for her consistent and principled leadership standing with Jewish Americans. We congratulate Dr. Abdul El-Sayed on his victory after a difficult and divisive primary."

Soifer also highlighted that "mainstream Democrats, including many of the candidates JDCA has endorsed, remain the key to winning back control of Congress"

and emphasized that Rep. Wesley Bell (D-MO) and Michigan state Sen. Jeremy Moss "overwhelmingly defeated challengers on the far-left."

AIPAC, while declining to preview specific plans, indicated it intends to stay engaged in the Michigan race through November.

"Our members remain determined to ensure that voters reject Dr. El-Sayed and his radical anti-Israel agenda in November," spokesperson Deryn Sousa told *Jewish Insider*.

In a letter to members, AIPAC President Bernie Kaminetsky said that the group will continue to "stand up for what is right, ensure pro-Israel voices are loudly heard in Congress, and fight even harder to ensure the U.S.-Israel alliance grows stronger."

"In Abdul El-Sayed, a fiercely anti-Israel candidate has emerged as the Democratic nominee. His statements about Israel, AIPAC, and the Jewish community are outrageous and offensive, and his ascent is part of a much larger, profoundly worrying trend we are closely tracking," Kaminetsky added, praising Stevens and her support for Israel. "This narrow loss stings, but

[Stevens'] defeat doesn't change our principled opposition to the dangerous policies El-Sayed wants to bring to the U.S. Senate."

Tacitly acknowledging setbacks across the political map, Kaminetsky emphasized, "Our conviction will not be measured in a single race or a single cycle. This is a generational fight, and we remain undeterred in our mission. Our political fight is not just about strengthening America's partnership with Israel. It is also about the future of America and our individual rights to engage in our democracy."

In a rare statement on campaign politics, Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt also highlighted the group's concerns about El-Sayed's rhetoric.

"Throughout the campaign, ADL has called out nominee Abdul El-Sayed for peddling in antisemitic tropes ... or for campaigning with notorious bigot Hasan Piker," Greenblatt said in a video statement. "Campaign trail rhetoric and actions send clear signals about what a person believes and what a political party thinks is permissible."

"We are not going to stop, and we will keep calling on political leaders and candidates from both parties to reject antisemitism and to commit to combating it whenever and wherever it occurs," Greenblatt continued.

ADL Michigan regional director Elyssa Schmier said in her own statement that "Jews across Michigan and the country are alarmed by the rhetoric that defined this race and its implications for the future of political norms in our country."

Calling out a series of specific comments by El-Sayed, without naming him directly, Schmier said that "anyone seeking public office should know better than to normalize antisemitic tropes" and that "we are calling on political leaders to reject antisemitism outright and demand better."

The American Jewish Committee, which also rarely comments on electoral politics, likewise issued a statement strongly condemning El-Sayed.

The group called his victory "a deeply troubling reflection of the growing

mainstreaming of divisive rhetoric and exclusionary politics in America. At the same time, Congresswoman Stevens' strong showing demonstrates that there is still a place and support for nuanced, moderate voices," it continued.

"We are concerned by El-Sayed's framing of American politics as a zero-sum game that too often casts those who disagree as the enemy," the statement continued, accusing him of "delegitimiz[ing]" those who disagree with him, an "approach [that] is fundamentally at odds with the principles of civility, pluralism, and robust democratic debate that are central to our democracy."

The group also condemned El-Sayed's past comments on Israel and its supporters and said that "most Americans agree that political rhetoric of this nature has gone too far," calling for voters "to reject extremist rhetoric from all candidates — no matter their party — that perpetuate this divisive approach."

The group said it would continue efforts

to engage leaders around the country "who seek to reclaim American politics from the extremes."

In a separate statement, AJC CEO Ted Deutch said that he saw during his time as a member of Congress "that when leaders treat those who disagree with them as enemies, the communities they represent feel the consequences" and emphasized "AJC's work to reject extremist politics."

Democratic Majority for Israel also criticized El-Sayed after his primary win for calling Israel "bloodthirsty" in a Wednesday morning interview.

"El-Sayed should be working to build a bigger tent and earn the trust of Jewish Michiganders. Instead, this morning he described the government of the world's only Jewish state as 'bloodthirsty' — an age-old antisemitic trope that is especially dangerous amid rising violence against Jews," the group said. "His language is inflammatory. He should retract it and apologize." ♦

AUGUST 6, 2026

Jewish Democrats in Michigan weigh crossing party lines after El-Sayed's Senate primary win

Several Jewish Democrats in the battleground state are now indicating that they will break with a party they have long called home and instead vote for the Republican nominee, Mike Rogers, in the November election

By Matthew Kassel

Abdul El-Sayed's narrow victory over Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI) in Michigan's bruising Democratic Senate primary on Tuesday is forcing many Jewish leaders in the state to confront an uncomfortable decision as they now look ahead to the general election in November.

Several Jewish Democrats in the battleground state are now indicating that they will break with a party they have long called home and instead vote for the Republican nominee, Mike Rogers, in the November election, citing their continued alarm over El-Sayed's hostile rhetoric toward Israel as well as remarks they have

interpreted as indifferent to rising antisemitism, among other concerns.

"I can't vote for El-Sayed," Michael Horowitz, a Jewish community leader and Detroit businessman who supported Stevens, a pro-Israel moderate, told *Jewish Insider*. "So many things I find despicable about him, not the least of which is his close association with Hasan Piker," the antisemitic Twitch streamer, who Horowitz said "demeans America, demeans Jews and demeans all but the most radical among us."

Horowitz confirmed he was now "leaning strongly to Rogers," a former congressman who narrowly lost in his bid

for Senate last cycle. "And I have heard from many in the Jewish community who say they will be supporting Rogers," he said on Wednesday.

Hannan Lis, a Democratic fundraiser and Jewish leader who splits his time between Michigan and Israel, was among those who had told *Ji* before the primary that he would vote for Rogers in the general election if El-Sayed won the nomination, noting he knows "many" Jewish Democrats who plan to do the same.

His reservations about Republicans preserving their Senate majority by picking up the Michigan seat held by retiring Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI), he clarified, were

superseded by his objections to El-Sayed's stances on Israel and responses to antisemitism. "El-Sayed is no Democrat," he claimed.

Dennis Bernard, a Jewish leader in Michigan who backed both Rogers and Stevens in their respective primaries, said that the "word is out on a few Rogers fundraisers targeting historical Jewish Dems," efforts that he described as "co-led" with Jewish Democratic donors.

"Candidly," he added, "the only area that may not jump on Rogers is the highly progressive Ann Arbor community," which he called "very small."

Bernard, national chair of government relations at the Jewish Federations of North America, told JI that it would likely take a few more days for such events to materialize as donors now "settle down and organize" in the wake of the primary. "Everyone is jumping in," he said.

One Democratic fundraiser in Michigan, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to address a sensitive subject, said he was "absolutely certain" that "several large Jewish Dem donors" will be supporting Rogers.

"I would guarantee there will be fundraisers for him hosted by high-profile Jewish Dems," he told JI.

The fundraiser, who backed Stevens, said that hours after the race had been called on Wednesday he was "already contacted by Rogers surrogates" seeking to make inroads with Jewish Democrats whose support could prove consequential in what is expected to be a close race.

The surrogates' pitch, as he put it: "Essentially that as Jews, we need to put our communal well-being ahead of the party."

It remains to be seen whether the depth of Jewish Democrats' fears of electing El-Sayed will ultimately translate to a meaningful boost for Rogers' bid amid a national political environment that is less favorable to Republicans.

Still, Rogers and his supporters have said they are eager to court Jewish Democrats alienated by their party as support for Israel has emerged as a litmus test on the far left — particularly in Michigan, where Jewish Democratic leaders have recently voiced

fears of antisemitic harassment from anti-Israel activists in the state.

Alyssa Brouillet, a spokesperson for Rogers, told JI on Sunday that his campaign was "beginning to see more and more Jewish Democrats coming to us who feel abandoned by their party."

"Mike Rogers stands with the Jewish community in Michigan and across the country," she said, "and he will continue fighting to make life better for working families all across the state."

In a video ad posted to social media on Wednesday, Rogers highlighted his opponent's close ties to Piker, featuring past comments in which the streamer said "America deserved 9/11," among other controversial remarks that have faced scrutiny. "You are who your friends are, and Abdul El-Sayed's are radical leftists who hate America," Rogers wrote.

The Republican Jewish Coalition called El-Sayed "a direct threat to Michigan's Jewish community" in a statement on Wednesday that urged Jewish voters in the state to get behind Rogers in the general election.

"To our friends in Michigan's Jewish community, including the tens of thousands who have voted Democrat their entire adult lives and now find themselves politically homeless: this is the moment for real change and action," said Matt Brooks, the RJC's CEO. "There are more than 100,000 Jewish voters in the Wolverine State. We are not a rounding error, we are the decisive margin. Mike Rogers has earned your vote."

Even as El-Sayed quickly won backing on Wednesday from national Democratic leaders hoping to unite the party for a must-win election, the Jewish Democratic Council of America stopped short of an endorsement, underscoring the extent to which the divisive primary has left some Jewish leaders rudderless after Stevens' defeat.

"While we are disappointed in the final result of the Michigan Senate race, the razor-thin margin isn't the resounding win for the far-left that was predicted," said Halie Soifer, the JDCA's CEO. "We are proud of the race run by Rep. Haley Stevens, and we thank her for her consistent and

principled leadership standing with Jewish Americans. We congratulate Dr. Abdul El-Sayed on his victory after a difficult and divisive primary."

Several nonpartisan Jewish groups, including the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, released statements on Wednesday condemning El-Sayed.

Deryn Sousa, a spokesperson for AIPAC, whose super PAC invested over \$30 million on an aggressive effort to boost Stevens, said in a statement that the group's "members remain determined to ensure that voters reject Dr. El-Sayed and his radical anti-Israel agenda in November," indicating it intends to back Rogers in the general election.

AIPAC's super PAC, United Democracy Project, did not return a request for comment, but sources told JI the group was all but certain to support Rogers, who was recognized as a pro-Israel hawk while serving in the House from 2001 to 2015.

For his part, El-Sayed, who made his opposition to AIPAC a central feature of his campaign messaging, sought to ease tensions with skeptical Jewish voters on Wednesday, addressing what he called "an issue that has been focused on in this race."

"To all of my sisters and brothers of the Jewish faith," he said in his televised remarks, "I want you to know that my commitment to your safety, my commitment to Jewish safety, is the same commitment that I have to the safety of my own daughters."

But many Jewish leaders in the state suggested that they would be unmoved by such appeals — especially as El-Sayed has continued to use incendiary rhetoric while discussing Israel. In an interview on MS NOW's "Morning Joe" on Wednesday morning, for instance, he doubled down on his criticism of Israel, calling the Jewish state "bloodthirsty" while saying his critiques go beyond the government led by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

His comments faced criticism from Democratic Majority for Israel, which said "El-Sayed should be working to build a bigger tent and earn the trust of Jewish Michiganders" but was instead invoking "an

age-old antisemitic trope that is especially dangerous amid rising violence against Jews.”

Asher Lopatin, a rabbi who serves as director of community relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and endorsed Stevens, told JI he has “heard from several people who say that they will campaign for Rogers and support him and tell others to vote for him.”

“I have not spent a lot of time looking into his positions,” Lopatin added, “but I can say clearly that I will not be voting for Abdul El-Sayed and I wish more Democrats would come out and say they will not be voting for him.”

Some Jewish Democrats in the state

have confirmed privately that while they cannot bring themselves to vote for Rogers, they will leave their ballots blank or write in another candidate due to their reservations about El-Sayed.

Despite widespread objections to El-Sayed within Michigan’s mainstream Jewish community, others suggested that their loyalty to the Democratic Party outweighed those concerns. “I know Jewish Dems who will vote for Rogers,” Richard Lenter, a Jewish community activist in Detroit, told JI. “I am leaning toward voting for El-Sayed while holding my nose.”

Michigan state Rep. Noah Arbit, a Jewish Democrat who has been outspoken against antisemitism in his party, declined to

confirm whether he would vote for El-Sayed, even as he expressed strong concerns about past comments in which the candidate has dismissed Zionists as “illiberal” and refused to recognize Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state.

“Abdul’s rhetoric has been alarming and dangerous for my community,” Arbit, whose district in suburban Detroit includes a sizable Jewish constituency, said in a message posted to Facebook Wednesday morning. “There is a profound need for him to come to the table and attempt to repair the harm he has caused, to see what semblance of trust and confidence may be built.” ♦

AUGUST 4, 2026

Darline Graham, backed by Trump, still faces obstacles in bid to succeed brother in the Senate

Polls show she’s largely unknown to South Carolina voters as she struggles to win a majority of Republican support

By Emily Jacobs

Sen. Darline Graham’s (R-SC) bid to succeed her late brother in the Senate is facing growing skepticism from Republican operatives and lawmakers who say President Donald Trump’s endorsement is unlikely to spare her from a runoff in South Carolina’s special GOP primary next week.

Over the last week, six senior GOP campaign operatives and Republican lawmakers told *Jewish Insider* that they believe a runoff is all but certain after the Aug. 11 special election primary, with most predicting Graham will not be able to clinch a majority of the vote to avert one as her brother, the late Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), did with his June primary victory.

While Republicans believe Graham will be one of the top two candidates in the race, thus allowing her a spot in the Aug. 25 runoff, they are still unsure whether she will face Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC) or Rep. Russell Fry (R-SC) in that contest. Those who spoke to JI expressed skepticism that Graham could win a head-to-head

showdown, despite having Trump’s coveted primary endorsement.

“The sense that this is going to go to a runoff seems pretty clear,” Doug Heye, a Republican strategist who served as communications director for the Republican National Committee and a deputy communications official for former House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA), said. “What happens after that is anyone’s guess.”

“Ultimately, it’s going to be a question of what Republican voters in South Carolina want to do and how they view the new Sen. Graham,” he continued. “You can’t really factor in what she’s done yet, but you know what she says she’s going to do. She doesn’t have a high name ID, although that is increasing every day, whereas the others who are running have much higher name ID and not just necessarily in their districts.”

The uncertainty surrounding the race has caused some to worry about Graham entering a competitive election contest,

which will require her to develop a full policy platform and hit the campaign trail as she mourns her brother’s recent death.

“It’s being said and unsaid by a lot of people on Capitol Hill right now. Up to this point, most people here have been more concerned about her personally than figuring out her political philosophy, asking if it’s fair to her to put her in this situation,” a Republican senator told JI. “This has got so many consequences. I’ve been very concerned about it. The people who express concern the most are still mainly worried about her personally, which is heartwarming, but the stakes are also very high.”

Four sources noted that Trump’s support for Graham did not deter Norman or Fry from entering the contest, nor has it hurt either of their performances in recent primary polling.

“There really is an appetite for change, but also for someone who is known, who has a proven record,” a GOP campaign source said. “Love them or hate them, folks

know what Ralph and Russell's records look like. Love them or hate them, you know where they stand. Darline is largely an unknown."

Republican sources pointed to issues around voter turnout, Graham's ability to fundraise quickly enough on the compressed campaign schedule, her lack of political background or voting record and the possibility of her losing support if portrayed to voters as being anointed to the role.

Darline Graham should be able to benefit from some of the leftover cash in her brother's campaign account. Lindsey Graham's campaign filed a statement with the Federal Election Commission after his death reporting \$2.3 million in remaining funds.

Lindsey Graham's campaign was able to transfer some of that money to the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Senate GOP campaign arm, for Darline Graham to use for her campaign, according to two sources with direct knowledge of the situation. The figure expected to be transferred is under \$1 million, one source confirmed, leaving Darline Graham with a possible cash disadvantage for the primary and the general election, where the Republican nominee will face Dr. Annie Andrews, a pediatrician who handily won the Democratic primary in June and has proven to be a strong fundraiser.

Prior to Lindsey Graham's passing, Andrews drew attention for outraising the incumbent senator in the first two quarters of 2026. Despite the fundraising success, national Democrats declined to commit resources to the race against Graham, which the *Cook Political Report* continues to rate as solid Republican even after his death.

Sens. Rick Scott (R-FL) and Mike Lee (R-UT) got behind Norman's campaign before Graham had entered; once she did, she quickly secured her own endorsements from three members of Senate GOP leadership: Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso (R-WY); Senate Republican Conference Chairman Tom Cotton (R-AR); and Senate Republican Policy Committee Chairwoman Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV).

Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-

SD) said after Graham announced her candidacy that he would not be weighing in with an endorsement, though he praised the incumbent senator as a "strong candidate" who "obviously carries on Lindsey's legacy."

Beyond those who have already endorsed her, Graham does not appear to have asked her other Republican colleagues in the Senate for their backing, according to two Republican senators and one senior GOP Senate staffer. The senators suggested that perhaps Graham was not in the right frame of mind to ask about endorsements herself, though both senators expressed surprise that no one from Graham's campaign had made those overtures on her behalf.

"Many of us had never met her before. All I knew was how much Lindsey adored her. He talked about her a lot. He referenced her a lot. He'd take her call whenever it happened to be," a GOP senator told JI of Graham. "But we don't have a clue how Republican she is. I don't have the faintest idea what her basic philosophies are."

"She hasn't asked me or the members that I've talked to," one GOP senator told JI on condition of anonymity of Graham seeking out endorsements late last week. "If she isn't asking and nobody is asking on her behalf, she sure as heck won't get a lot of them. Maybe she'll get around to that next week now that she's on the job full time. It's kind of a pivotal week, I would say."

Graham has picked up one House endorsement from Rep. William Timmons (R-SC), who opposes Norman's candidacy, while Norman has been endorsed by Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC) and former Rep. Bob Good (R-VA). He also has the support of former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, who served with Norman in the House.

The slow drip of congressional endorsements have since ground to a halt, as it became clear that Graham's surprise campaign launch and Trump's support for her candidacy had not deterred her Republican opponents or hurt their polling numbers.

"Many of us had never met her before

[she was sworn in to serve out the remainder of her brother's term]. All I knew was how much Lindsey adored her. He talked about her a lot. He referenced her a lot. He'd take her call whenever it happened to be," a GOP senator told JI of Graham. "But we don't have a clue how Republican she is. I don't have the faintest idea what her basic philosophies are."

"She's still grieving," a senior GOP campaign official involved with the race told JI. "Nobody wants to be seen hitting someone whose brother literally just died — and then was vaulted into a very public, very national spotlight — but at some point the gloves are gonna have to come off at least somewhat."

"I suspect that being through what she's been through the last couple of weeks, reliving his whole life basically in written word and broadcast and even just storytelling, she's probably getting a pretty good lesson if she's still forming her positions," the senator continued. "I doubt she's 180 degrees from him, but I don't know what's in her heart."

Several Republicans have expressed concern that voters would respond poorly to the idea of Graham running while mourning the loss of her brother. They also worry about the possibility that the contest turns negative and the consequences of that shift.

One Republican senator told JI that they were "afraid it could be a brawl before it's over, especially if her opponent feels like they're up against a wall and corners her. We know how this goes."

"If they get to a runoff, at that point, it is a whole new ball game and she's no longer a grieving sister. She becomes a semi-incumbent obstacle to whoever wants to win," the senator said. "These things happen faster nowadays. We have short memories."

The South Carolina senator faced her four leading opponents in a televised debate on Monday evening. Graham was joined on the debate stage by Norman, Fry, former Gov. Mark Sanford (R-SC) and Mark Lynch, a MAGA-aligned businessman who

lost to Lindsey Graham in last month's primary by 30 points.

The debate was largely respectful, though Graham called out Lynch in her closing statement for repeatedly criticizing her late brother while on stage. "I don't know if I can rebut, but Mr. Lynch mentioned Lindsey Graham multiple times. I don't know if he's just afraid Lindsey beat him and now his little sister is going to beat him, but I just don't like hearing that," Graham said.

Graham used the debate to highlight where she and her late brother agree and disagree on policy matters, emphasizing their shared support for the U.S. war in Iran and how they diverge on the filibuster, which Darline Graham said she supports abolishing to pass the Save America Act despite her late brother's opposition to the move.

It is unclear if the two candidates who

advance to the runoff, should one be triggered, will hold another debate.

"Lindsey just made his way through a pretty contentious primary himself, and there is a degree of the primary electorate that was not a fan of his. I think that segment will still be very much adamantly opposed to this because they'll see it as a continuation of the policies that they don't support," a senior GOP campaign source said. "Ralph Norman is a little bit better positioned to capture some of these hardcore conservative voters. I think she'll have a difficult time even with the president's endorsement."

"This is potentially a race where debates could have a real impact, in part because this would be part of her introduction statewide as a candidate," Heye said. "In moments like that where you have somebody in that situation, it's very important for the other people on stage,

including the moderators, to be appropriately respectful."

While several Republicans acknowledged Trump's endorsement as a key booster for Graham, they pointed out that her late brother, who was known to be close to the president, struggled in his own primary.

Heye noted to JI that, "Not everything that happens in a Republican primary is about Donald Trump. His endorsement is always a boost, but that's it."

Reached for comment, Graham campaign press secretary Abby Zilch told JI in a statement, "Sen. Darline Graham has had to work hard for every single thing she's ever done — running for the United States Senate will be no different. That's just one of the many reasons why President Trump has endorsed her and why so many South Carolinians see a true fighter in this campaign." ♦

AUGUST 6, 2026

A Sapir essay imagined 'Jewish thriving.' Atlanta's Dupree built it a home.

New center for adult Jewish education aims to serve as a hub for the Southeastern Jewish community

By Justin Hayet

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Walk into Atlanta's Dupree Center and, as community leader Michelle Simon puts it, "It's like 'Cheers'; everyone knows your name."

In his 2023 *Sapir* essay "Three Falsehoods About Antisemitism—and One Truth," Bret Stephens drew a distinction between "thriving Jews" who succeed as individuals and the collective flourishing that he referred to as "Jewish thriving." At Atlanta's new Jewish education hub, The Dupree — as the locals call it — that idea is coming to life.

The early evidence is in the turnout. Dupree's board braced for a slow start, but the community responded in full force,

drawing 4,347 community members to 120 programs so far this year, the center told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. Months into her new role, founding executive director Dana Sender-Mulla frames the stakes plainly, making the case that deep adult education is how Jewish identity gets built and passed on. "Jewish identity won't carry itself forward on inertia alone. It has to be chosen, cultivated and built — in real places, by real communities," she said.

The idea for Dupree originated with Atlanta-based philanthropists Helen and David Zalik as part of their long-term strategy of investing in Jewish education. Sender-Mulla said that while it did not entirely originate from Stephens' 2023 essay, The Dupree framework was molded as he defined Jewish thriving, as a collective ideal: a secure and self-confident

Israel; a proud and knowledgeable Diaspora; and Jewishness held as the most cherished part of a person's identity.

"Jewish education has always been close to my heart, because Jewish wisdom is where so many of us find meaning and purpose in our lives," said Helen Zalik in a statement to eJP. "Adult Jewish education is at the heart of The Dupree: a place to keep growing into who we are as Jews, no matter where we start."

The Dupree is also a physical hub. The building houses nearly 20 Jewish organizations, with three more in the works, among them the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta and Hillels of Georgia, alongside commercial tenants and a kosher restaurant. For security reasons, the center does not publish a full tenant roster, leaving

each organization to decide how and when to discuss its move.

"We weren't interested in creating an office building for Jewish organizations," Sender-Mulla said. "We wanted to create a place where the Jewish community naturally comes together every day — a home for organizations, learning, culture, philanthropy and conversation."

"When organizations share the same space, chance encounters become collaborations," she said, "and people begin thinking of themselves as part of a larger community rather than separate institutions."

Sender-Mulla was equally clear that the center sits alongside Atlanta's established institutions. "We don't see ourselves as competition with other [Atlanta-based] organizations, but rather as an opportunity to uplift things that are already happening in the community," she said.

Sender-Mulla recently joined the organization, relocating from South Florida with her husband, their four children and the family dog, Shalom. Raised in Israel, Sender-Mulla found her passion for the field in the Diaspora. "I found the love for this field when I was a teenager living in

Singapore and understanding what it was to be a Jew in a setting as a minority," she said.

The work has always been personal. "I had a lot of knowledge and connection to my Israeli identity and very little to my Jewish one," she said, describing the gap that shaped her career. That arc informs a conviction she now applies at The Dupree: adult education carries the highest strategic return. Invest deeply in a parent, she said, and the effect reaches children and grandchildren.

Sender-Mulla drew a straight line back to Stephens, whose 92nd Street Y address this year also sent ripples through the Jewish community. He warned that building Jewish identity around combating antisemitism hands the antisemite the first and last word on what it means to be a Jew.

The center calls itself a Zionist organization and welcomes Jews across the spectrum, Sender-Mulla said. It will not partner with groups that deny Israel's right to exist.

The center has hosted former Israeli Ambassador to the United States Ron Dermer; journalist Yossi Klein Halevi; Andrés Spokoiny, president and CEO of the

Jewish Funders Network; Rabbi Elie Kaunfer of the Hadar Institute; and Zack Bodner, founder of the Z3 Project, among others. Natan Sharansky and Rabbi Meir Soloveichik are among those slated to come.

Atlanta is the 11th-largest Jewish community in the United States. Sender-Mulla paired that scale with a Southern intimacy in which newcomers get woven in quickly — a growth community fueled by transplants who often arrive without extended family or a childhood synagogue nearby, she said, so places that create belonging matter more.

Michelle Simon, the local Jewish federation's women's philanthropy president, has become a regular at the center's programming. She has attended lunch-and-learns and heard speakers there, drawn by a calendar she describes as consistently substantive. "It's the hub of our Jewish community," she said.

Simon said she values the center most for the range of learning it makes possible on any given day. "There's always something for everyone, and for everyone to feel they have a place there," she said. ♦

AUGUST 6, 2026

Generational challenge threatens Ed Case in Hawaii's under-the-radar primary

A 42-year-old progressive state senator has quietly closed the gap on the 73-year-old pro-Israel incumbent, with internal polls showing a tightening race before Saturday's vote

By Matthew Kassel

Rep. Ed Case (D-HI), a moderate pro-Israel Democrat in Hawaii who was first elected to the House in 2002, has not drawn a serious primary threat in several years.

Now, as he prepares to defend his seat in a primary on Saturday that has largely flown under the radar, some Democrats are warning that Case, 73, could be at risk of losing to a younger challenger capitalizing on a national political environment that has proven unfavorable to Democratic incumbents amid broader calls for

generational change from the party's activist base.

"It's one of those sleeper races where there's definitely an upset brewing," said a Democratic operative who worked on the Case campaign until a few months ago, speaking on condition of anonymity to avoid professional reprisals. "Ed is running a poor race," the former staffer told *Jewish Insider*, echoing other observers who described a sluggish approach in which Case has largely foregone campaign events and avoided debates with his opposition.

While the contest has not centered around Israel or AIPAC, which has officially endorsed Case but is not involved in the race, it reflects a trend seen in several recent Democratic primaries, where well-established pro-Israel incumbents were unseated by increasingly competitive challenges from an emboldened far left.

Jarrett Keohokalole, a 42-year-old progressive state senator, has instead argued that his opponent is not meeting "the urgency of the moment," to which Case has countered that "seniority matters" in

Congress — where he sits on the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

Keohokalole's message is resonating, experts in the state and recent polling suggest, particularly after a separate challenger dropped out of the race in May, effectively narrowing the contest to what is viewed as a one-on-one matchup in Hawaii's safely Democratic 1st District, anchored by the state capital of Honolulu on Oahu.

One Democratic strategist in Honolulu who is not involved in the primary told JI that Keohokalole "is making this closer than" Case "would like to see" in the final stretch of the race. "There's really not much of any excitement around him," he said of the veteran lawmaker.

"I think it's going to be closer than anyone would have predicted back in the beginning and may come down to a single-digit difference," another Honolulu strategist who is not working in the primary told JI.

"Jarrett has closed the gap" and run a "very effective campaign," the strategist added, noting that Case had stepped up his digital advertising and texting, "which he hasn't ever done before."

Polling from Keohokalole's campaign conducted in early July and obtained by JI had Case leading by eight points, 33-25%, with 42% undecided. A more recent internal tracking poll from July 24 showed Keohokalole leading Case by seven points.

Martin Hamburger, a veteran Democratic ad maker who is serving as a media consultant to Keohokalole, said he was feeling optimistic. "Our first poll showed us that there was a big name ID gap, but Case wasn't breaking 50 percent," he told JI, noting that he cut an introductory ad with a jingle about how to pronounce Keohokalole's name based on a tune preschoolers in Hawaii learn.

"I think we have a very, very good shot,

as good a shot as all the work I've done in Hawaii," Hamburger told JI this week. "There are a lot of trade winds that are blowing in a 'throw the bums out' sort of mood."

Hamburger's firm has also been working for Future Progress, a new super PAC that recently entered the primary to boost Keohokalole and whose donors have yet to be disclosed. But he said he was not personally involved in the effort and that his firm had instituted a firewall between the campaign and the super PAC.

In contrast with other races where Middle East policy had featured prominently, "Israel has barely come up at all," Hamburger told JI. He described Keohokalole as more closely aligned with J Street, the progressive Israel advocacy organization. Hamburger, who called himself pro-Israel and an AIPAC supporter, said that he wrote Keohokalole's Israel position paper but was unable to share the final draft with JI.

Keohokalole, backed by groups critical of Israel such as Our Revolution and Peace Action, has appeared to avoid more divisive rhetoric on Israel used by the far left, including claims of genocide. But he has still positioned himself well to the left of Case on Middle East policy, recently confirming he would have voted in favor of an amendment to end aid to Israel that drew support from more than 100 House Democrats. Case opposed the measure.

To the extent Middle East policy has emerged as a salient issue in the primary, it has come in relation to the Iran war and rising gas prices that have provoked broader debates about affordability.

"I haven't read or heard Ed Case say 'I opposed the war in Iran and we need to stop the fighting now,'" Keohokalole said recently. "I haven't heard him say, 'Not one more taxpayer dollar' toward extending this conflict. It needs to end now."

He has also criticized Case for taking contributions from AIPAC and defense contractors, but the group has not been a major source of attention in the race, even as it has grown increasingly toxic in other Democratic primaries. Keohokalole has not actively sought to draw attention to Israel during the race, observers say.

A spokesperson for AIPAC declined to comment on the primary.

While experts say that Case is likely vulnerable, a low-turnout election combined with Keohokalole's relative lack of name ID remain as obstacles in a state where it is notoriously difficult to unseat incumbents.

John Hart, a professor of communications at Hawaii Pacific University, called speculation that Case is in trouble "wishful thinking," while also acknowledging that "the progressive end of the party and some of the Hawaii party leadership" is "not happy with some of his votes."

"However, it is incredibly difficult if not impossible to take out an incumbent Democrat at the federal level in this state," Hart told JI, adding that Case "simply hasn't made the major kind of mistake either in his personal, financial or policy choices that would result in this stunning of an upset."

Neither campaign returned requests for comment from JI.

Whatever the outcome, the former Case campaign staffer said the race more broadly demonstrates how progressive challengers to AIPAC-backed incumbents can mount an opposition without fixating on Israel.

"While Israel is obviously playing a large factor nationally," the former campaign staffer told JI this week, the Hawaii contest "shows there is a pathway for progressives to win without making the whole race about AIPAC." ♦

AUGUST 5, 2026

Dara Horn's shocking new title hides a serious argument about fighting antisemitism

Five years after 'People Love Dead Jews,' the novelist's new book reframes Jewish hatred as a lie about destruction — and tells Jews they don't have to accept it

By Gabby Deutch

If you thought *People Love Dead Jews* — Dara Horn's 2021 essay collection examining society's reverence for remembering deceased Jews while failing to support the living ones — was an awkward book to read in public, just wait until you get your hands on Horn's newest title: *The Final Solution to the Jewish Question*.

Horn, a celebrated novelist who has become the bard of contemporary antisemitism since *Dead Jews* was published five years ago, is in on the joke; she likes to say that both titles make great beach reads because no one will dare sit within several feet of you. (Her dad even made a custom *People Love Dead Jews* beach towel for her to test out the theory.)

But despite borrowing its title from the name of the Nazis' infamous plan to rid Europe of its 11 million Jews during World War II, Horn's latest book, which will be published on Sept. 1, is not a Nazi manifesto.

Instead, the title of Horn's new book serves as an eye-catching, subversive dog whistle that is meant to pique the interest of antisemites — while also serving as a cheeky summary of Horn's goal of actually trying to come up with a solution to the wave of antisemitism that has swept the world in recent years.

She just can't believe that she is the one coming up with those solutions.

"I saw *People Love Dead Jews* as just a detour from my real work, which I see as writing novels," Horn told *Jewish Insider* in an interview last week.

The genesis for Horn's latest book came in the aftermath of *Dead Jews*. She spoke at public events often in 2021 and 2022, and she recalls becoming "the receptacle for everyone's horror stories." People would go up to Horn after she discussed the book and

tell her about their own experiences of antisemitism. They often chalked up these incidents to jokes or misunderstandings or annoyances, such as a couple being ghosted by a longtime friend after the friend attended their son's bar mitzvah or an actor turned down for roles in Hollywood because they looked "too Jewish." But when taken together, they present a picture of a society that has learned to accept ambient anti-Jewish hate.

"This is going to sound really ridiculous," Horn reflected on her previous book, "but I didn't even really think it was a book about antisemitism. I saw it as a book about this weird historical phenomenon about the way we commemorate the past and how that affects the present."

Many Horn acolytes felt that her thesis was borne out during the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas terror attacks in Israel, the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust, as they watched sympathy for Jewish victims turn to anger at Israel's military response and even praise for Hamas' actions.

"I'm not happy to have been right about this," she said.

Horn became a sought-after expert on the willingness of many people to excuse contemporary hatred of Jews while insisting that they are not, actually, antisemitic. She was asked to serve on an antisemitism advisory group at Harvard, her alma mater, though the effort quickly fell apart. She testified to a congressional committee investigating antisemitism at Harvard. In early 2024, she wrote an essay in *The Atlantic* describing antisemitism as "the big lie," and examined why so many smart people, including at Harvard, are willing to fall for it. Through all of it, American Jews — particularly young people on college campuses — wrote to her

constantly, describing all the ways they had been excluded, shunned, cast out or harassed simply for being Jewish and declining to disavow Israel.

Horn is not, reflexively, a cynic. She does not think most people are out there looking to attack Jews. She summed up her understanding of non-Jews and how they relate to antisemitism by invoking the story of Purim, the holiday that celebrates the Jewish people's courage in the face of a genocidal leader.

"Most people are not Haman," Horn said, referring to the king's advisor, who sought to exterminate the Jews of ancient Persia. "Most people are Ahashverosh." That's a reference to the bumbling king who pleaded ignorance at the malicious plans of his closest advisor but ultimately supported his ouster when the king's wife, the Jewish Queen Esther, revealed her identity and asked for his help.

With her new book, Horn wanted something to offer the people who are ignorant rather than hate-filled, something to share with "your friend who doesn't get it," or "the principal of the school who is dealing with this," she told *JL*.

"I am providing a solution. Not a solution in terms of, like, 'Here's 10 policy points we should implement,'" Horn explained. "It's, 'Here's the story we need to be telling about who we are, to ourselves and to everyone else,' and this is the story that is going to inspire people to imagine a better future."

So what is that story? Horn wants the world to see Judaism as "a 3,000-year-old anti-tyrannical movement" that "is always going to piss off dominant societies."

So the way to understand modern-day antisemitism, Horn argues, is not about "bias or bigotry or prejudice [or] conspiracy theory." It's about framing antisemitism as a lie.

“The lie,” Horn continued, “is always the same: Jews are destroying what you value the most.”

Since *Dead Jews* came out five years ago,

and particularly after Oct. 7, Horn has watched many people freeze in the face of that assertion. She has observed a fatalism

creep into the Jewish community, a sense that nothing can help, that this is our lot.

To those people, her answer is simple: “You don’t have to put up with this crap.” ♦

AUGUST 5, 2026

23 Shabsels’ camps sell at auction, many for well over their asking price

Many high bidders, including Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav, missed out as private investors and current co-owners snap up properties

By Jay Deitcher

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Traditionally, the majority of American summer camps have run as community nonprofits with a small number of family-owned for-profit camps. This is especially true in the Jewish world, where more than 345 nonprofit camps fall under Foundation for Jewish Camp’s umbrella.

But in 2006, New York-based real estate investors Michael and David Shabsels began snapping up camps, amassing a portfolio of more than 30 overnight and day camps, some charging more than \$17,000 per season to attend. In early June, their empire crumbled after the brothers double pledged assets and defaulted on loans, leaving the camp scene in chaos and them potentially facing criminal charges.

After the brothers declared bankruptcy two months ago, both personally and under their umbrella group, Simad Holding, the campsites went up for auction, and on Tuesday, a New Jersey bankruptcy court filed paperwork announcing the winning bidders, with 23 properties sold.

In total, the 23 campsites — some of which are home to more than one camp — sold for \$368.3 million, and debtors are “still analyzing the Qualified Bids” for Camp Lavi in Pennsylvania, according to the filing. Outside of the auction, four additional properties — Camp Achim, Camp Chen-a-Wanda, Camp Mesorah and Pine Forest Camp — sold in private sales for \$71.7 million, with Camp Achim and Chen-a-

Wanda selling to current operators and Mesorah selling to healthcare mogul Daryl Hagler, who plans to invest \$2.2 million into the camp.

Camp Lavi is rumored to be close to selling to the Jewish mental health nonprofit Ohel Children’s Home and Family Services, Inc. and there is a change.org petition to halt the prospective sale.

“A proposed sale could result in Camp Lavi being closed and replaced, permanently taking away a one-of-a-kind Jewish camp that has given generations of children lifelong friendships, confidence, belonging, and unforgettable memories,” the petition, organized by parents, alumni and community supporters, said. “We cannot let this happen.”

In a statement sent to Camp Lavi families, Camp Lavi representatives acknowledged the possible sale, saying that they are attempting to “engage with its leadership” and that “We remain hopeful that there is still a path for Ohel to work with Camp Lavi’s leadership and supporters to preserve Camp Lavi’s independent future and ensure that this extraordinary institution continues to serve generations of Jewish families.”

The auction saw some camps sell to current operators, including Camp Green Lane in southeastern Pennsylvania, which sold for just over \$8 million, leaving many of the families who send children to the camps relieved to see that they wouldn’t be changing hands.

There were some unexpected moves,

including Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav’s Grandview Ventures being outbid for Mohawk Day Camp. Zaslav had made a play for his children’s summer camp, offering \$68 million for the luxury camp. In the end, it went for nearly twice as much, selling for \$120.8 million to FitzWalter Capital Partners, a global private investment firm.

Ohel Children’s Home and Family Services, Inc. was also expected to purchase Camp Echo for \$12 million, a move that caused concern amongst parents who worried the camp wouldn’t remain in its current form, but instead it sold for \$17 million to American Youth Camping Inc., which purchased five other camps.

At least one camp was purchased by a nonprofit, with Country Roads Day Camp in Manalapan, N.J., selling to the Jewish Community Center of Greater Monmouth County for \$14.5 million.

The other camps sold at the auction that ended on Monday included: Banner Day Camp (\$30 million), Camp Lokanda (\$19,327,800), Camp Mogen Avraham (\$22.4 million), Club Getaway (\$13.3 million), Eagle’s Landing Day Camp (\$5.2 million), Greenville Land / Malka (\$8.2 million), Island Lake Camp (\$13 million), Meadowbrook Country Day Camp (\$12.3 million), Rolling Hills Country Day Camp (\$28.5 million), Indian Acres Camp for Boys & Forest Acres Camp for Girls (\$6 million), Camp Med-O-Lark (\$2.3 million), Camp North Star (\$6.3 million), Camp Waukeela (\$1.2 million), Camp Wekeela (\$9.9 million),

New England Golf & Tennis Camp (\$2 million), Windsor Mountain Summer Camp (\$8.5 million), Blue Star Camps (\$15 million), Summit Camp and Travel (\$4.8 million).

The camps went up for auction after the brothers rolled the dice, double pledging assets and missing bond payments. In total, they owe over \$344 million to creditors. This includes \$200 million owed to Israeli investors for bond payments that the brothers defaulted on. Last week, the Department of Justice launched a criminal investigation.

David Greenfield, CEO of the Met Council, had hoped to bring together a team of philanthropists to purchase one of the camps and run it as a nonprofit under his organization as a way to make camp more accessible to those who can't afford it.

Greenfield told *eJewishPhilanthropy* that he planned to bid on two camps, which he wouldn't name specifically, but the idea

never got around to being discussed with the board. There were two things working against him, he said: the rushed time frame to sell the camps and the "passion bidders" who paid tens of millions over the asking price for "trophy" campsites that they were emotionally attached to.

"People were overpaying for some property as a result," Greenfield told eJP. "If you're a billionaire, an extra million dollars is not going to make or break you. That's not a big deal. If you're a nonprofit, an extra million dollars is the difference between whether your camp breaks even or loses money every year."

What finally halted his plans was when he found out the current co-owners of the campsites had hoped to purchase the camps completely. He looked to a Jewish law that said a current tenant of a property is supposed to receive the opportunity to purchase the property before others. Instead, he is now considering a different

camp that is not part of the Shabsels' portfolio.

He expects that the reason the camps had to sell so quickly was that the bankruptcy court wanted to ensure that families could sign their kids up for next year. "There's a lot of concern for a parent if you don't sign up your kids at the end of the summer," he said. "They would have lost a lot of kids unless there's continuity."

Camps are not big money makers, Greenfield said, and many of the Shabsels' camps had been running in deficit.

"It's not clear that the [Shabsels] business thesis ever really made sense," he said. Investing in a camp is investing in "aging stock." Cabin roofs are old, so are the sewer systems and the pools. "The camps are all old. So you really have to invest a lot of money and time and resources. I'm not convinced that this was ever a great business plan." ♦