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THE WEEKLY PRINT

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OCTOBER 28, 2026

Haley Stevens fiancé says he's voting for Mike Rogers

Jason Turkish said he made up his mind to vote for Rogers following the first Michigan Senate debate, and felt that he 'couldn't live with myself if I didn't speak up'

By Marc Rod

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — Jason Turkish, the fiancé of Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI) and a prominent Jewish Democrat in Michigan, said he plans to vote for Republican Mike Rogers over Democrat Abdul El-Sayed in the state's closely watched and bitterly fought Senate race.

Hours later, Stevens herself affirmed on CNN that she still supports El-Sayed. But she also emphasized that in order to win over undecided voters, El-Sayed should openly denounce an ad from his own campaign featuring Tucker Carlson and an outside ad blaming aid to Israel for high prices in the United States.

Turkish told reporters at a Republican Jewish Coalition event for Rogers on Wednesday evening, which he attended immediately after announcing his decision to *The Detroit News*, that El-Sayed had run a campaign of division that consistently, "references Jews or Jewish-related associations as a reason why people should give money to his campaign."

Turkish said that he made up his mind to support Rogers after the first general election debate, when El-Sayed described Israel as a threat to the United States comparable to Iran. "It is 100% disqualifying to be a United States senator," Turkish said. Other Jewish Democrats also called that debate a breaking point for them.

Turkish argued that El-Sayed is well-aware that U.S. aid to Israel constitutes a miniscule fraction of the federal budget, "yet Jews are blamed" consistently in El-Sayed's fundraising appeals for a lack of healthcare and education funding in the United States.

He told *Jewish Insider* that he went public with his support for Rogers, and decided to attend the RJC event because he "couldn't live with myself if I didn't speak up."

"This isn't about Haley's career. This isn't about my support. This is about who Abdul El-Sayed supports. That he supports a man who says America deserves 9/11," he said. "I believe that Abdul El-Sayed is actively losing this campaign for Senate right now by not standing up against hate, and that history will remember who stands where in this moment, and that it will not remember Abdul El-Sayed kindly, and we need to push his hateful brand of politics to the dustbin of history."

El-Sayed spokeswoman Roxie Richner told *The Detroit News*, "Abdul is focused on building a broad coalition to win Michigan and win back the Senate majority for Democrats. Our tent is big enough for all those who wish to join it."

Asked about his conversations with Stevens on his decision, Turkish told JI that he was "so proud of the race Haley ran" and that she had "opened her arms and her heart to Abdul after he won this primary — and some criticized her for that, in ... the Jewish community."

He said that Stevens is a "proud American who believes in a Democratic system, who believes that when you compete in a contest, you respect the outcome." Stevens endorsed El-Sayed immediately following the primary, but has not campaigned with him and offered a tepid response this week when asked if she stands by that endorsement.

Turkish said that he was waiting and watching to hear El-Sayed — with whom he attended the University of Michigan — moderate but instead "he got worse and worse and worse as this general election campaign has gone on" and made the Jewish community "less safe" — along with other communities as well."

Turkish expressed outrage over a recent ad by a PAC supporting El-Sayed that

blames aid to Israel for high prices in the United States. The El-Sayed campaign has distanced itself from the ad but has not explicitly condemned its contents.

"I think it was one of the most hateful ads in the history of American politics," he said. "It's an absolute new low, and in typical Abdul El-Sayed fashion, he doesn't disavow it. He disclaimed association with it. Abdul, why is it so hard to say this is a hateful ad and it doesn't represent my campaign? The reason it's so hard for him is because he fundraises off of this very hate, and it's why this choice for me in the end was very simple."

He said it was no surprise that far-left commentator Cenk Uygur, uncle of streamer Hasan Piker, was behind the ad. "Hasan Piker is a hateful, hateful man," Turkish said, adding that he was offended that El-Sayed would bring Piker on the campaign trail and on a stage in front of college students.

"This isn't somebody from his distant past. This is somebody that Abdul El-Sayed admires," Turkish said. "This is a man who spews hate, and Abdul El-Sayed put him on a stage in front of college kids. It is 100% disqualifying to be a United States senator."

He said he's been hoping for El-Sayed to "disavow this hate without equivocation [but] he won't do it. Everything we hear from Abdul El-Sayed includes equivocation. It includes equivocation to try to explain away hate — and there is no explaining away hate. And I predict to you that Michigan will reject this."

He also invoked Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), for whom he fundraised in 2024. "She spent her entire career saying, in certain moments, you put country over party — this is one of those moments," Turkish said.

Slotkin, who endorsed and campaigned for El-Sayed, has criticized Rogers and his supporters for Islamophobic bigotry.

Turkish said he's not concerned about how this decision might impact his position in the Democratic Party going forward and this was "not a political decision." He said he's supporting other Democrats up and down the ticket.

"You can support Democrats up and down the ballot and make a choice to choose country over party in one race," Turkish said. "The message is simple: the time is always right to do what is right."

Stevens' fiancé is the second person close to the former Democratic candidate to say he plans to support Rogers this week, following David Kramer, who chaired Stevens' Senate campaign and introduced Turkish and Stevens.

Appearing on CNN on Wednesday evening, Stevens said she is voting for El-Sayed, but in order to win over undecided voters, including from the Jewish and Black communities, who supported her campaign, he needs to take down his campaign's ad featuring Tucker Carlson and to explicitly condemn the antisemitic Rebellion PAC ad in support of his campaign.

"People are coming to me about this, and they're Black voters, they're Indian American voters, they're obviously Jewish voters, working class voters, and so let's shut out the hype. You know, let's get these undecided voters over the finish line. Let's make sure that Michigan has the representation it needs in the United States Senate," Stevens said.

"I fully believe he can do this, can denounce Tucker Carlson and denounce antisemitic hate, things that make particularly minority communities feel less safe, and actually make them less safe," she continued. "I know he has it in him to denounce these two ads, to take them down. I know that undecided voters would feel very reassured to see this."

She said she hasn't had such a conversation directly with El-Sayed, following a CNN report earlier in the day that she and the Democratic nominee haven't communicated in months. ♦

OCTOBER 28, 2026

David Jolly looks to translate moderate, pro-Israel record in Congress to upset in Florida governor's race

The former GOP congressman's ability to win over Jewish voters could be threatened by DSA member Angie Nixon, the Senate candidate on the Democratic ticket

By Emily Jacobs

Florida Democrats are confident that former Rep. David Jolly, the state's Democratic nominee for governor, will handily win the Jewish vote over Rep. Byron Donalds (R-FL), his Republican opponent — and believe Jolly is running a competitive race that could deliver a surprise victory.

But Jolly's campaign has been complicated by the presence of Angie Nixon, the Democratic candidate for Senate, on the same ticket — a dynamic that Donalds has been quick to elevate — as well as the Sunshine State's conservative trend.

"Republicans have obvious structural advantages in Florida now, not the least of which is a one-and-a-half-million-person voter registration advantage," former Rep. Robert Wexler (D-FL) told *Jewish Insider*. "If this was a normal year, and voters were relatively happy, or at least only moderately unhappy with the direction of the country, the Republican candidate would undoubtedly win with a substantial margin, but that's not the case."

Jolly, a Republican-turned-Democrat, has a pro-Israel record from his time in Congress and has emphasized his support for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship on the

trail. Donalds, meanwhile, is a close ally of President Donald Trump and holds a similarly pro-Israel record.

Jewish voters in Florida have swung to the right in recent elections, with 44% of Florida Jews voting for President Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election, according to the VoteCast exit poll conducted for the *Associated Press* and Fox News. But there are also signs that Jewish voters in key swing districts, such as those in the South Florida district of Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), are rewarding pro-Israel Democrats who have spoken out against the elements of the left that are hostile toward the Jewish state.

"I think we're going to see David hit that 75% marker," Florida state Sen. Tina Polsky, a Jewish co-chair of Jolly's campaign, said. "David is acting as an incredible unifier of the Jewish community by leaning into his feelings about combating antisemitism, his support for Israel and his love of the Jewish community."

Democrats' confidence does not extend to Nixon, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America who shocked the party with her defeat of Alex Vindman, a more moderate, Jewish challenger, in the Democratic primary.

While polls show the gubernatorial race as highly competitive, Nixon continues to trail Sen. Ashley Moody (R-FL), who was tapped to fill Marco Rubio's seat in 2025 after he was confirmed as secretary of state and is running to serve out the remaining two years of the term.

Nixon, a veteran community organizer in the Jacksonville area, holds staunchly anti-Israel views and opposes providing offensive military aid to the Jewish state. During the Democratic primary against Vindman, Nixon said she would have voted to cut off military aid to Israel, a stance that she has maintained as the general election candidate.

Two days after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on Israel, Nixon posted a statement on X that condemned "unjust killings" without blaming Hamas and mentioned lives being "lost on both sides." Nixon deleted the post within hours, though she left up several replies where she defended the "both sides" remark.

From late 2024 through early 2025, she appeared at several fundraising events in Florida hosted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, during which she referred to those who opposed her resolution as her "permanent enemies."

Her presence on the Democratic ticket has posed a challenge for Jolly, who has been campaigning as a moderate. Jolly is a supporter of Nixon's campaign but acknowledges that they diverge on Israel.

"We're just honest about our differences," Jolly told JI in an interview last week. "The politics have just shifted so quickly, and so, as we navigate this, I always return to the baseline values that I hold. I consider myself an ally of Israel, I have been throughout my career in politics. I still think on the international scene the two-state solution is the right answer. I think the truce was broken on Oct. 7. It launched a war that went on too long, it should have been brought to a close. I think the West failed all people in that ensuing time."

Jolly added that he believes Trump "has been completely manipulated by" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"I think it's time for Netanyahu to go, and I think our alliance with Israel will be strengthened when Netanyahu's gone, but we're currently living through a very fragile chapter in that relationship, and you're seeing those politics play out in both the Republican and Democratic Party," he said.

Operatives on both sides of the aisle say Nixon's anti-Israel positions, while hurting her own prospects in the Jewish community, have not appeared to diminish Jolly's standing.

"David Jolly being pro-Israel, even in a governor's race, does give him an opening with those voters, especially since he's trying really hard to separate himself from Angie Nixon," a Republican operative connected to Donalds' campaign said.

But Florida Republicans still believe that the state's sharp conservative turn in the last decade gives them a decided advantage, despite the rough national environment for the GOP. Trump carried the Sunshine State by 13 points in 2024, and outside Democratic groups haven't spent nearly as aggressively in Florida as in other red states that they're contesting.

Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) told JI that those trends are compounded by Jewish voters being alienated by what he called the Democratic Party's embrace of the DSA.

"Jewish voters, it seems like every two years a higher and higher percentage of them vote for Republicans, because what they've learned is Democrats are not supportive of Israel. They're not fighting antisemitism. Matter of fact, some of them are antisemitic, like [New York City Mayor Zohran] Mamdani, [Michigan Democratic Senate nominee Abdul] El-Sayed, people like that," Scott said. "They don't want that in our state, so I think Byron's going to do really well. I'd be shocked if he doesn't."

In an interview with JI last week, Donalds attributed Jolly's competitive polling numbers to voters' lack of familiarity with him or his record, and acknowledged that the current state of the U.S. economy had created a difficult environment for Republicans.

"People don't want to see high gas prices. I understand that. I don't want to pay high gas prices either, so I completely understand where people are coming from," Donalds said. "We're in a position where for the first time in eight years, we're electing a new governor. I think that there are a lot of voters who are now saying, 'OK, well, I know [Gov.] Ron DeSantis. I'm still trying to learn Byron Donalds.'"

Donalds said that while he was taking "nothing for granted," his campaign's internal polling shows that "the race is starting to look more like a Florida race."

"Is it going to be a 19-point spread like it was four years ago? I don't think so, and nobody thinks that, but I think we'll end up doing quite well on election night," Donalds told JI.

Republicans in the state noted that Donalds has made Jewish outreach a priority in the campaign, and predicted that voters would take note of his decision to hold firm on his support for Israel and continue engaging the Jewish community. They also point to his equanimity in dealing with racist and antisemitic attacks from James Fishback, one of his primary opponents.

"This primary season, unfortunately, showed that there is deep antisemitism on

both sides of the aisle. The things James Fishback said were despicable. Byron fought back against that, as did Rick Scott and many other Republicans," Jackie Zeckman, one of Scott's longest-serving advisors, said. "In the primary, Byron sat down with Jewish leaders. He made the Jewish community a priority not just because of his record, but because he was running against someone who has a horrible record on these issues and said things that were incredibly racist and antisemitic."

Zeckman, who serves on the board overseeing the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, argued that Donalds' criticism of Fishback places Donalds in contrast with Jolly, who has declined to condemn Nixon despite distancing himself from some of her views.

"Byron Donalds has condemned James Fishback. Has David Jolly condemned anything Angie Nixon has said? No, he hasn't condemned her or said that anything she has said or done as a candidate is wrong," Zeckman said. "Has he condemned Hasan Piker for saying that my boss, Rick Scott, should be murdered? I don't think so. If he has, I haven't seen it."

Across the political spectrum, Jewish and pro-Israel operatives in Florida told JI that the top priority for Jewish voters was addressing security concerns amid rising antisemitism. In practical terms, that means the state offering resources to ensure security needs are met at Jewish institutions such as synagogues, Jewish day schools and Jewish community centers.

"The Jewish community is looking very closely at this race. What I'm hearing is that they are skewing very much towards Byron Donalds, and that's mainly because they are looking northwards. They're looking at Zohran Mamdani. They're looking at [New York Gov.] Kathy Hochul," Rob Garson, Trump's personal lawyer and another USHMM board member who is supporting Donalds, told JI. "They are unhappy with the hounding of the Jewish community and they don't want that to happen here. The reason why they've moved to the state of Florida is in order to get away from socialist tendencies, woke tendencies."

Both of the state's gubernatorial candidates told JI that they heard the same message from Jewish Floridians.

"Once you get past affordability, it's wanting to be safe," Donalds said of Jewish voters. "People want to know that Florida's going to continue to be a law and order state, a state where antisemitism is not allowed, and that it's held accountable. We are going to continue to be that state where we don't tolerate bigotry or antisemitism."

"This is an era where the rise of antisemitism is real and is audibly felt in communities that too often fear for their safety and feel as though speech in the public arena drifts into outright hostility or threats of harm," Jolly told JI, adding that the Jewish community was seeking "as governor, a voice willing to condemn it and fund security programs that protect synagogues."

Donalds and Jolly both say they'll continue providing state resources to support the Jewish community's security needs. ♦

OCTOBER 28, 2026

Hochul appoints commission to help plan New York State Holocaust memorial

The advisory body for the future Albany monument includes figures from the ADL, UJA-Federation, AJC and The Blue Card, among others

By Will Bredderman

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul announced a new 19-member panel of Jewish nonprofit leaders and Holocaust remembrance organizations to facilitate the creation of a planned memorial in Albany to the six million Jews murdered by the Nazi regime.

Hochul signed legislation last December to establish the monument on the plaza near the Statehouse in Albany. In a release disclosing the community and historical groups who will provide input on its design and message, the Democrat highlighted the spike in hate crimes targeting Jews since the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel.

"The New York State Holocaust Memorial will be a powerful tribute to the millions of lives lost and a lasting reminder of our shared responsibility to preserve the truth of history," Hochul said. "This memorial will ensure that the stories of victims, survivors and their families remain visible, remembered and recognized. By bringing together this distinguished advisory commission, New York is sending a clear message that we will stand firm against all efforts to sow hate and divide our communities."

Dan Rosenthal, a former state lawmaker and current vice president of government and external relations at the UJA-Federation of New York, will also serve on the commission — and struck a similar note to the governor, whom he praised.

"At a time of rising antisemitism, it is more important than ever that we honor the memory of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, recognize the survivors, and ensure that future generations understand where hatred can lead," he said in a statement to *Jewish Insider*. "I look forward to working with my fellow commission members to create a meaningful place of remembrance and education."

Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York CEO and President Rob Kovach, another member of the commission, also lauded Hochul and vowed the future site would preserve and expand awareness of the genocide of European Jews.

"A permanent Holocaust memorial in Albany will serve as a lasting tribute to the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, honor the survivors who helped build communities across New York, and provide a powerful educational resource for future generations," Kovach said in a statement. "By creating a permanent place of remembrance at the seat of state government, New York is reaffirming its commitment to preserving Holocaust memory, combating antisemitism, and ensuring that the lessons of history remain visible and relevant for all New Yorkers."

Members of the new body will include the Ariel Behrman, vice president of education at the Anti-Defamation League; Masha Pearl, executive director of The Blue Card, an organization that aids veterans and Holocaust survivors; Sara Fredman Aeder, executive vice president of programming at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York; Tali Farhadian, CEO of the Museum of Jewish Heritage; Laura Shaw Frank, the American Jewish Committee's vice president for education; Judy Coe Rapaport, past president of the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum; Ellie Kastel, executive director of the Borough Park Y; Jack Britvan, president of Voices for Truth and Humanity; Lauren Bloomberg, director of the Holocaust Education Resource Organization at the Buffalo Jewish Federation; Michael Cohen, executive vice president of the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation; Monica Gebell, senior director of the Center for Advocacy and Education at the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester; Millie Jasper, executive director of the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center; Andrea Myer-Winograd, executive director of the Holocaust Museum & Center for Tolerance and Education; Gavriel Rosenfeld, president of the Center for Jewish History; Dave Reckess, executive director of 3GNY – Descendants of Holocaust Survivors; Rochelle Saidel, executive director of Remember the Women; and Lori Weintrob, executive director of the Wagner College Holocaust Center. ♦

OCTOBER 27, 2026

Philanthropy closely monitoring Israeli election, waiting to see next coalition and its priorities

'Funds and foundations are waiting to see what the elections will bring,' Sigal Yaniv Feller, the executive director of Jewish Funders Network-Israel, tells eJP

By Justin Hayet

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

As Israelis cast their ballots today in the long-awaited election, the first since the Oct. 7 terror attacks, much of the Jewish philanthropic world is also anxiously awaiting results, refreshing the news and messaging Israeli colleagues and family. For many, the outcome of the election will not only be a matter of political or ideological concern but also a matter of significant professional consideration, shaping funders' priorities and opportunities for years to come.

Some major foundations have been holding off on large strategic commitments until a new government takes shape and opportunities for government matching and collaboration grow clearer. Meanwhile, in recent years, some funders have moved into political philanthropy and are waiting to see whether their efforts paid off. Sigal Yaniv Feller, the executive director of Jewish Funders Network-Israel, has watched those shifts from the epicenter of the Jewish philanthropic world and its giving in Israel.

Yaniv Feller joined the Israel arm of JFN in 2015, serving as deputy director and senior director of advisory services before becoming executive director in November 2021. The Jewish Funders Network is nonpartisan, and its members hold a wide range of political views.

In an interview with *eJewishPhilanthropy*, Yaniv Feller outlined the trends reshaping Israeli giving ahead of the vote, the issues likely to stay on funders' agendas once a new government forms as well as her reasons for optimism.

Justin Hayet: *Israelis head to the polls today. How has the lead-up to the election shaped funders' decisions over the past year?*

Sigal Yaniv Feller: The moment before the elections is generating a lot of sitting on the fence, in terms of philanthropic decisions on the longer term and strategic, larger-scale investments.

Funds and foundations are waiting to see what the elections will bring. Meanwhile, we are also seeing rapid decisions that the government is taking, such as pulling money out of the commitments to the five-year plan for Arab society and shared society and putting that funding into the security and defense needs of the country. A lot is on hold until after the elections, when there will be more clarity about the direction of the country.

We are seeing some philanthropic trends related to the election. The first is that quite a few funders and foundations are actively

involved in political philanthropy. They have come out of the closet, so to speak. In previous years, they did it more discreetly. Now they're out in the open. That does not necessarily mean funding a specific party or candidate. They're involved in organizations and initiatives related to maintaining the integrity of elections, creating a good pipeline of leadership in the political arena and helping create professional political agendas for the various parties, right and left, on topics like education, employment and gender.

JH: *What else are you seeing on the ground?*

SYF: The second trend is that we see some foundations put a lot of money into political philanthropy at the expense of other fields that they might've funded previously. So temporarily, just like we've seen after Oct. 7 — that funders doubled down on emergency [grants] and maybe paused the regular funding — now we've been seeing a pause in regular funding in order to support doubling down on elections.

The third trend we are seeing is foundations that have deep collaborations with the government that are afraid to be associated with political involvement and are very, very vigilant and careful not to be seen as politically [against or in favor of the current government] so that it doesn't damage or impact their collaborations and [potential] match funding with the next government.

The fourth trend is that the high-tech sector is involved in funding political philanthropy at the moment. A lot of the high-tech community is invested in liberal democracy causes and organizations. This is the same high-tech community that was heavily invested in the demonstrations against the judicial reform and also stepped up immediately post-Oct. 7.

JH: *How are philanthropic foundations preparing for the next government?*

SYF: There are quite a few foundations that have been investing over the past year and a half in in-depth policy papers, white papers, research, mapping, to be able to be ready to whichever government is elected and offer them well-thought-through and strategic plans around different fields in Israel, ranging from education to welfare to domestic violence to gender equality to climate to employment to mental health. These funders want to ensure that the new government has reliable data and policy proposals so the government can move quickly and hopefully promote some of these.

JH: *How does this moment fit into the history of Israeli philanthropy?*

SYF: If we look at the history of philanthropy [in Israel], the first 50 years of the State of Israel, philanthropy largely invested in nation-building: investing in the infrastructure of Israel, our academic institutions, our health institutions, our infrastructure and the army. In the past 20-25 years, philanthropy has evolved into investing much more into human capital and society-building.

I like to differentiate between the era of nation-building and the society-building that we are currently in. And they are not mutually exclusive. There are still a lot of capital grants and investment in nation-building, but alongside that, there's been a lot of investment in leadership development, civil society and society-building.

And after Oct. 7, the philanthropic community had to backtrack and go back into investing in nation-building, in the South and in the North, but philanthropy also continued to invest in society. And I think, to the same tone of that, we will see a lot of that after the election: a continuation to invest in the nation's infrastructure, but also in our society, and our polarization and our leadership and creating trust again and creating optimism and hope.

JH: *You mentioned investing in leadership. How could the election affect the people who lead Israel's nonprofits?*

SYF: Throughout the campaign of the last few months, we see human capital moving from the philanthropic and nonprofit sector into political parties, which is natural. That happens every year, every time there are elections, but we're seeing more of that now. And after the elections, we'll see movement again of human capital. So if some parties lose, we might see some of their manpower moving into the nonprofit and philanthropic sector, and if some parties win, we might see more movement of good people from the nonprofit sector into the government, both into the professional roles and the political roles. I think there's another wave coming, depending on the election results.

JH: *What do Israel's nonprofits need most from funders right now?*

SYF: The sector that held the country together after Oct. 7 was Israel's social sector. We need to invest in it to make sure we have a strong backbone to be able to face our future challenges. So I think that's a critical, critical element to invest in.

Take an additional $10,000 or $20,000 and take your staff on a retreat or maybe finance mental health support for your staff if they need it. It's not a lot, but it would go a long way, and the fact that these organizations feel that they're seen by their funders goes a long way. And I've seen quite a few funders do this in the past two years, and it's been amazing.

JH: *As emergency giving winds down, which focus areas will stay on funders' agendas?*

SYF: Mental health is a huge focus for funders and it's going to continue to be very big. Just a few weeks ago, in one week, there were six suicide events of IDF soldiers who had been released from the army and then committed suicide while they were still in service. Regional recovery, especially economic regional recovery, in the South and the North — but necessarily a larger emphasis on the North. That's a big priority [for many funders].

The erosion of democracy is huge, and I think it needs to be something philanthropy invests in, especially because philanthropy has a critical role in a democracy. And if we are no longer a liberal democracy, it will be much harder for philanthropy to operate, and the nonprofits are gonna be limited in their scope of operation. And so I think having a strong, democratic, Jewish country will continue to be a priority for funders.

And of course, the last two topics that are ongoing but in a very bad situation are our education system and the violence in Arab society.

JH: *What gives you hope right now?*

SYF: We've seen new foundations to Israel. They aren't necessarily new, but they're new in their larger-scale investments in

Israel. Second is that existing foundations are expanding their infrastructure on the ground by hiring more professional staff, looking for office space, and that means the growth of the professional community, professional philanthropic community, that sustained all this work.

Also, we haven't seen funders leaving Israel. We haven't seen Israelis — you know, maybe there are Israelis that are leaving Israel, at least temporarily — but we haven't seen any of the JFN-Israel philanthropic community funders leave Israel. And we know that they can live anywhere in the world that they want to, but they're here to stay, and they're investing and doubling down in Israel. We've seen them over the past 3½ years very committed, very deeply involved with giving and with hope and involvement to make Israel a better place.

JH: *Wait, there's more optimism?*

SYF: Fourth optimistic note: the scope and level of philanthropic collaboration. In my 25 years of working in the philanthropic sector in Israel, I've never seen such a scope. It's the largest and widest that it's ever been. It's the era of philanthropic collaborations, so we are seeing so much collaboration. ♦

OCTOBER 28, 2026

KIND founder Daniel Lubetzky calls *Semafor*'s Qatar ties 'downright unethical'

Lubetzky's charge came days after the outlet argued that claims of Qatari terror funding lack evidence

By Haley Cohen

Daniel Lubetzky, the founder of KIND Snacks, accused the global news publication *Semafor* of compromising its journalistic independence through its financial ties to Qatar, alleging that the outlet was receiving outsized resources from the Qatari government for programs that did not require that level of funding.

In a post on X Wednesday, Lubetzky alleged that *Semafor*'s CEO and co-founder Justin Smith told him about the program funding after the outlet was founded in 2022 as he was ostensibly seeking Lubetzky's investment. He said *Semafor*'s continued sponsorships and events with Qatar, alongside what he described as favorable coverage of the country, raise ethical concerns and called for an investigation into Qatar's financial influence on American media and educational institutions.

Lubetzky recalled that, during their conversation, Smith acknowledged that the cost to conduct a program was "a tiny fraction of what he was getting paid" by the Qatari government for it — "directionally it was something like getting paid $2 million to conduct a 'media training' boot camp that would cost *Semafor* $50,000 to execute," he wrote.

Lubetzky said that he told Smith at the time that the arrangement sounded like he was "being bribed," arguing that "no entity pretending to be a journalism outfit should accept stuff like that, as it would compromise him." He called Semafor's alleged financial ties to Qatar "downright unethical" and said the outlet "does a disservice to the profession by undermining trust."

The comments come days after *Semafor* published a story by its Gulf editor, Mohammed Sergie, arguing that accusations of Qatari funding of terrorism and influence operations lack sufficient evidence.

Lubetzky — a lifelong advocate for the Jewish people and for peace in the Middle East — has also founded public charities aimed at combating antisemitism and other forms of hate. He became a regular investor on ABC's "Shark Tank" in 2024.

He did not respond to a request for comment from *Jewish Insider* asking for further details about his meeting with *Semafor*'s leadership.

A *Semafor* spokesperson defended the outlet's journalistic independence in a statement to JI, saying it had never accepted investment from a government or sovereign wealth fund. The spokesperson did not directly address Lubetzky's allegation about a payment for journalist training or other revenue received from Gulf governments. Media companies frequently decline to disclose financial details on behalf of their partners.

"*Semafor* is proud to have hosted the Independent Media Initiative workshop with *Al-Monitor* to train young journalists from around the world," the spokesperson told JI, referring to a journalism-training program launched in October 2024 at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar, with subsequent workshops held in January and May 2025 and another in December 2025. "*Semafor* has never accepted investment from any government or sovereign wealth fund, and we remain firmly committed to independent journalism. Our reporting is guided by facts and free from influence by advertisers or commercial partners."

When *Semafor* unveiled its Middle East-focused edition, *Semafor Gulf*, in July 2024, it announced Invest Qatar — the Qatari government's investment promotion agency — as an inaugural launch partner. The partnership included digital and event collaborations, according to *Semafor*'s announcement, which also named First Abu Dhabi Bank and G42 as launch partners.

Semafor was co-founded by Smith, a former Bloomberg Media CEO and former *BuzzFeed News* Editor-in-Chief Ben Smith, now *Semafor*'s editor-in-chief. The two share a last name but no relation.

The outlet has also attracted investment from prominent business leaders and philanthropists, including Carlyle Group co-founder David Rubenstein and former Atlantic Media chairman David Bradley, as well as Penny Pritzker, the former U.S. commerce secretary whose investment firm, PSP Partners, participated in *Semafor*'s January funding round. ♦

OCTOBER 29, 2026

New study finds younger Americans struggle to recognize antisemitism on social media

The research, commissioned by the Anti-Defamation League and Boundless, also found that reminding participants of the social stigma surrounding antisemitism was an effective response

By Haley Cohen

Young Americans struggle to recognize antisemitism on social media, whether it involves explicit hate speech or modern rhetoric targeting Israel and Zionism, a new study by the Anti-Defamation League and Boundless shows. At the same time, the study found that reminding participants that most people reject antisemitism successfully nudged them to identify and report the abusive content.

The study, released Thursday, surveyed nearly 7,500 Americans between the ages of 18 and 44. To evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, the researchers showed participants real social media posts featuring classical and contemporary antisemitism from the political left, right and no specific affiliation.

Respondents struggled to recognize contemporary antisemitism, often expressed through hatred towards Israel and Zionism, especially compared to classical antisemitic statements, such as a tweet claiming Jesus "called the money grubbing jews the 'synagogues of Satan,'" which was more easily identified.

The researchers tested six interventions, including messages offering a Jewish perspective, explaining the personal impact of antisemitism, raising awareness of disinformation and providing neutral information. Most did not significantly improve respondents' ability to recognize — or willingness to report — antisemitic content.

A short message emphasizing that antisemitism is rejected by most Americans was the only one of six interventions tested to produce improvements in reporting across the broader sample, increasing the likelihood of reporting certain posts by about six percent.

While the message's impact was modest, its simplicity and potential to reach millions could make it a powerful tool in combating online antisemitism, according to Matt Williams, vice president of the ADL's Center for Antisemitism Research. "Moving the needle six percent on recognizing and reporting antisemitic content doesn't seem like much for a room full of people but think of what a six percent reduction across millions could bring about," he said.

The findings also revealed a generational divide in how young Americans respond to antisemitism online. Millennials were somewhat better than Gen Z respondents at recognizing antisemitic content.

Gen Zers, however, were more likely to report antisemitic content once they identified it as hateful. Among respondents who recognized a post as antisemitic, 77% of Gen Zers said they would report it, compared with 68% of millennials, suggesting that Gen Z faces a greater challenge in recognizing antisemitism while millennials may be less likely to act on it.

The findings come amid other research pointing to generational differences in attitudes toward Jews and Israel. A Yale Youth poll last year, for example, found that younger voters were less likely than older respondents to reject a series of antisemitic statements, including claims that American Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the U.S. and that Jews have too much power. ♦

OCTOBER 23, 2026

Wrapping up as Jewish Agency chair, Mark Wilf remains hopeful amid Israel's 'greatest challenge'

'I go back to my parents and grandparents, who were Holocaust survivors... They were hopeful and that's how we need to be — and that's challenging.'

By Judah Ari Gross

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

When Mark Wilf was elected chairman of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors, the Jewish world was in the midst of a crisis. Russia had just invaded Ukraine, home to one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe, sparking a massive wave of *aliyah*. The Jewish world was also still emerging from a crisis — the COVID-19 pandemic — which had threatened the survival of Jewish schools, synagogues and other institutions.

At the Board of Governors meeting in Tel Aviv next week, Wilf will end his tenure, and his successor, J. David Heller, will be voted into office.

A real estate developer through his family's firm, Garden Homes, and the president and co-owner of the NFL's Minnesota Vikings, Wilf has been a fixture in the Jewish communal world for decades, serving and having served on the boards of numerous institutions in the United States and Israel, including Yad Vashem, Yeshiva University and Jewish Federations of North America, where he also served as board chair.

From his office in New Jersey, Wilf sat down with *eJewishPhilanthropy* this week as he wraps up his time at the helm of the Jewish Agency, discussing the values of strong Jewish communal infrastructure, the organization's response to the Oct. 7 terror attacks and his hope for the Jewish future.

The interview has been lightly edited for clarity.

Judah Ari Gross: *Your term is wrapping up. It's certainly been an eventful, to say the least. Let's start with your topline takeaway from this period.*

Mark Wilf: In July 2022, when I took the role, I could not have anticipated the extraordinary challenges that would come about, particularly in the aftermath of [the Oct. 7 terror attacks]. But I will say the Jewish Agency has really demonstrated a unique ability to mobilize the Jewish world, respond to crises and translate all the generosity that was in response to Oct. 7 into really meaningful impact. It strengthened a lot of trust among our partners, donors and the communities we serve. Even though we're a nearly hundred-year-old institution, we really showed our relevance, effectiveness and ability to deliver when it matters most. Maybe since the founding of the state, it's one of our strongest moments, I think, as an organization and as a people in terms of responding.

I'm a big believer in strong Jewish institutions, strong infrastructure. And so I think all the partnership and cooperation that we've seen since Oct. 7 really remain indispensable for the Jewish People.

JAG: *You are what I think of as an "institutional giver," with ties to Jewish Federations of North America, Yad Vashem — the large, storied institutions. What is the motivation behind that? Why the focus on that kind of communal infrastructure?*

MW: I think when you have the kind of large-scale issues that Israel is facing — there are dozens, hundreds of nonprofits that do incredible work — you need the large infrastructure, the relationships, the partnerships to respond quickly and effectively during a crisis. You have to be ready to go. I quote Eric Fingerhut, who's been saying, "You don't build a fire department when the house is on fire." You need the fire department in place already, and that's a lot of what the large-scale institutions represent.

World Jewry and the entire Jewish Agency board... is committed to Israel, and of course, the recovery is a long-term one, and we need to stand by all the communities in Israel as people rebuild their lives. And we're uniquely situated to do that because we have the relationships, we have the trust and we have the track record.

The Jewish Agency predated and led to the State of Israel. It's in the DNA of JAFI to continue that Israel continues to thrive and be a strong society. And we also want [Israel] to be the state for the Jewish People as well, and that connection to Diaspora Jewry is very strong.

JAG: *You came into office at the peak of the Ukraine invasion crisis, and the Jewish Agency played a major role in that because of the wave of* aliyah. *But soon after you came in, the Israeli government that was in place collapsed. It seems as though there has been an amount of tension between the Jewish Agency and the government over the past three years. What has the relationship with the government been like?*

MW: I'm not sure exactly what you're referring to, but there's always been a very dynamic relationship between the government and the Jewish Agency for decades. And I think actually our cooperation at the ministry level — support within the budget and recognition of the trusted nature of the Jewish Agency — has led to a dramatic amount of cooperation and coordination with the government. So I'm not sure what kind of thing you're referring to.

JAG: *I was referring to the coalition's votes on the Western Wall and non-Orthodox conversions.*

MW: A sizable portion of our budget is coming from the government because we're building Israeli society. We're involved in resilience... in rebuilding. We're working

with the government in so many ways, in so many aspects, among so many people.

So I think it's been healthy, and I think our donors should know that it's a win-win. The Jewish Agency is going to work with the government of Israel regardless of politics because the Jewish Agency is about building the state and connecting to the Jewish Diaspora and growing pride in the Jewish community and involvement.

I can highlight a couple of key areas, if that's all right.

JAG: *By all means.*

MW: We have the Victims of Terror Fund. There's the financial assistance aspect — we have had tremendous support from JFNA, Keren Hayesod and others — but it's also about the solidarity that the fund represents. And I've been privileged in unfortunately tragic situations to deliver checks to victims and to see what it means to them, not just the money, but the fact that they're part of an extended family and get that solidarity.

We've had Communities2Gether [connecting Israeli communities with North American ones] since Oct. 7. Many [Israeli] communities have had great, great support for rebuilding and recovery. And the Jewish communities [abroad] — and I've been privileged to see it — they're not just giving money to these communities that they're partners with, but they're really leaning in. They're active partners in their planning, and the relationships are very supportive emotionally, too.

There's also small business assistance. That's been a big lean-in for us, especially loan funds, grant programs for reservists and their families.

One that I'm really proud of, which was a byproduct of Oct. 7, was Campers2Gether. It was [offered as] respite for young Jews [from the Gaza envelope and northern Israel] to go to summer camp around the world, to take a break from the horrors of Oct. 7. The next-generation engagement has been dramatically increased. We're close to 2,000 *shlichim* (emissaries), and there's a bond you see between young people that is energizing. It's a two-way street, both [Diaspora Jews] experiencing trips to Israel and Israelis coming to camps and communities around the [world].

JAG: *Have you seen any distancing from donors during your tenure, of people who once supported the Jewish Agency but are now pulling away because of politics?*

MW: I'm not sure about the things you're talking about in terms of the data. To my mind, there was a tremendous surge of activity from donors and from outreach and support in response to Oct. 7. Naturally, after anything of that magnitude, there might be a subsequent leveling off, but I have not seen firsthand any pullback because of the political situation in Israel.

As far as my seat at the Jewish Agency, we have a tremendous donor base. We have partners that are very supportive, and their support has not waned. In fact, like I said, it's increased and grown, realizing the scale that we can bring and the effectiveness we can bring.

We're still responding to a lot [after Oct. 7]. The trauma is still very real, and we're focusing on recovery and rebuilding. It's going to be years of that. And I think we're well-positioned.

JAG: *Have you seen any shifts among your supporters, new types of people coming on board or smaller numbers of donors accounting for more of the donations?*

MW: We've been very engaged with our communities. I'm proud that in our last four years, we've really upped our game with the members who sit on our board of governors. We've been very intentional in terms of making sure we have board members and people around our collective table that are highly engaged in our work, who are effective, many of them significant donors and supporters, but also they're people that are leaders in their spheres. And that even goes for national institutions.

We now have cooperation at the highest level in our history, perhaps, with WZO, with Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund. We are getting support from national institutions, financially, maybe more than ever before because of the strength of our programs.

I think a lot of people woke up, who were not necessarily connected to the Jewish community. You can call them Oct. 8 Jews — or whatever the term of art is these days — but many people awoke to the realities, and the fact is it's in many people's faces.

There's antisemitism, there's protests. You watch the news, and see what's going on in countries around the world.

JAG: *When you came into this position in July 2022, what was your vision? What did you hope to accomplish? Was anything derailed by the past three years of war?*

MW: We're in a new reality, and when I took on the JFNA chair role [in 2018,] the COVID-19 pandemic happened, and we had to shift into gear to rescue hundreds, if not thousands, of Jewish institutions that needed funding. So our history is full of challenges, and Oct. 7 might be the greatest challenge the State of Israel's people have faced since the founding of the state.

One of my goals was to focus on our next generation. I believe that the goal then was to double or triple the capacity for engagement. Like I said, some of it because of Oct. 7, some of those goals became accelerated to achieve things like Campers2Gether and the next-generation engagement. Unfortunately, the Israel experience trips have not been as strong. Many young people in the Diaspora over the last three years have missed the opportunity to spend meaningful time in Israel, and that's something that we need to get back to.

But I'm very proud of the expansion and effectiveness of the work we've done with Campers2Gether, our *shlichim* network and our [post-high school] *Shinshinim* program. I've gone to meet them, spend time with them and every time I see them... I wish every donor, every Jewish person could see the energy, the passion, and the hope they give me, and they should give to all of us.

Also, one of my goals was that Israeli and Diaspora Jews should be better connected and better aware of each other. And I think in Israel we've developed a little bit more awareness, but many people in Israel really are not familiar with the Diaspora and the communities, and we need to do more of that.

JAG: *In terms of the trajectory that you see the Jewish Agency on as you hand over the keys, so to speak, what areas do you hope that the organization preserves and what do you want to see strengthened? You*

mentioned broadening the awareness in Israel of the Diaspora.

MW: I've been speaking about the trust and the sense of partnership. We have to continue supporting Israel's recovery. I think we have a base now to do that from. We need to be strengthening the broader mission of connecting Jews to Israel and to one another. That's very important.

Of course, we can's allow antisemitism and crises to go unanswered or to define our future. So we have to invest in Jewish identity and education and leadership and connection.

So the Jewish world is very diverse. We have religious practices, identities, and they're all around our table. We are the global Jewish table, and I think we're positioned to tackle all those issues together.

I didn't mention aliyah, but that's also a continued core mission of the Jewish Agency. I know tens of thousands have made *aliyah* even since Oct. 7. And I know for [Jewish Agency Chair Doron Almog] and all of us that's a goal.

JAG: *Going back to the issue of communal infrastructure, like you said, a lot of the big institutions really did prove themselves in the early days, weeks and months after Oct. 7, when people really needed help. But since then, a lot of criticism has returned about them, that they're bloated bureaucracies and require 15 committees to make a decision. How has the Jewish Agency been receptive to those critiques? How do you make Jewish communal infrastructure more efficient and more responsive?*

MW: I think with Doron and [CEO] Yehuda Setton in charge, there has been a great push to modernize so many aspects of the Agency. Our *aliyah* processing system just received an award from the Israeli business community, and I think the Victim of Terror Fund did as well. I think there's a recognition in Israeli society and even in the world that the Agency is efficient.

Yes, we have committees, bt we've also streamlined committees.

There's now a lot being done in terms of the infrastructure of our computers and AI and all our processes. So we're modernizing on a lot of fronts.

Again, there's going to be growing pains when you're talking about an organization that in six years' time its budget nearly doubled.

So these are dramatic shifts, and there needs to be adjustments on all fronts to it. And we're doing a lot of the work with, in many cases, only a small increase in the number of staff.

I want to just point out that, on a personal basis, one of my great privileges in this role is to get an understanding about Israel, which I love so much, in a new capacity. And the resilience of the Israeli people and the Jewish People — but Israelis in particular — since Oct. 7 has been so inspiring to me. It really reflects to me the heroism of our professionals, of our staff. Despite all the personal challenges they have — we had employees whose family members were hostage and all the rest — yet they continued their mission.

Those are the things I'll take away with me

JAG: *And what are your plans for the future?*

MW: So I'm not going that far away. My wife, Jane, and I are going to be supporting and chairing the Jewish Agency's centennial campaign. The centennial is coming up in 2029 to even further strengthen this foundation for our next chapter.

And I've got plenty going on here [in the United States.] I am still engaged in our real estate business and sports businesses and all that. Of course, I sit on different boards as well.

I will miss this role, but I feel really good about the fact that the Jewish Agency is poised for a great future and most importantly Israel and the Jewish People are poised for a great future.

I go back to my parents and grandparents, who were Holocaust survivors, and they went through the greatest tragedy to befall the Jewish People and out of that, they always remained optimistic. They were hopeful and that's how we need to be — and that's challenging.

But when you are around the table with the people I've been privileged to be around the table with for the last four years, I'm highly optimistic and feel strong about our future. ♦