

JEWISH INSIDER

1). Do you believe there is a concerning rise of antisemitism on the [Right or Left], including in your own party? How do you propose to address this issue?

The story of North Carolina belongs to all of us regardless of one's religious beliefs. We've seen a concerning rise in hate-fueled incidents, like bomb threats at Jewish Community Centers across the country, and we must do more to combat hate and keep our communities safe.

When our leaders refuse to speak out against bigotry, it sends the wrong message to those who perpetuate hate. As Senator, I will speak out against antisemitism, bigotry or discrimination of any kind and make clear that hate has no place in North Carolina or our country.

We must also do more to address the root causes of antisemitism and bigotry and prevent acts of hate or threats of violence from happening in the first place. If I'm elected, I look forward to continuing my work with the Jewish community and other targeted communities across the state to work toward solutions to keep North Carolinians safe.

2). Do you think a two-state solution will facilitate peace between Israelis and Palestinians? If so, what are the basic parameters? If not a two-state solution, what do you suggest? What do you agree or disagree with about the Trump peace plan?

As a member of the United States Senate, I will be a strong supporter of active American leadership to achieve lasting peace through a two-state solution to the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. In my view, a two-state solution that establishes borders reflective of Israel's unique security interests is the only way to ensure long-term stability and safety for both Israelis and Palestinians. Although such an agreement must ultimately be directly negotiated to by Israeli and Palestinian leaders, it is critical that the United States take a leadership role in the process. I oppose expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank and support ensuring there is ultimately a capital in Jerusalem for both Israel and Palestine. As we pursue peace, I will oppose unilateral actions that obstruct the path toward two-states on either side of the conflict.

At the same time, a negotiated solution lead by the United States also cannot be achieved unless both Israeli and Palestinian leaders are prepared to engage with one another in good faith and with a recognition of each other's rights. For that reason, efforts to support a negotiated agreement must begin with Palestinian negotiators recognizing Israel's rightful existence as a Jewish homeland and forcefully condemning

violence perpetrated by Hamas, Hezbollah and other extremist groups. The continued acknowledgement by Israeli negotiators of the essential human rights of Palestinians is also a key component, including demonstrating that they can be counted on to work amicably and reliably with a future Palestinian state.

3). Why would you re-enter or stay out of the JCPOA with Iran? If re-enter, under what conditions or changes? How should the United States deal with the Iranian government on an ongoing basis? Should the U.S. military maintain a presence in the Middle East?

During my military service in Iraq, Iran played a negative and destabilizing role on United States coalition security efforts by funding, training, and deploying Quds forces into Eastern Iraq, supporting Shite extremists and militias, and planting deadly EFP (explosively formed penetrators) devices. In short, Iranians killed US troops.

In my view, there is no higher priority in the Middle East than thwarting Iran's ambition to develop nuclear weapons. A nuclear-armed Iran presents an existential threat to Israel and would further destabilize an already precarious region. Moreover, it would present a threat to the United States and our interests. For that reason, I support reengaging with the Iranians under the framework established by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ("JCPOA") negotiated by the United States and our European allies, while retaining the right to sanction Iran for malicious non-nuclear activities like terrorism.

Strictly limiting Iran's ability to develop its nuclear capabilities is paramount, and the JCPOA includes hard-won safeguards against the terrible threat of a conflict with Iran. Abandoning our commitments under the agreement diminishes our credibility throughout the world and, more importantly, makes Americans and Israelis less safe.

While bringing the United States back into compliance with the JCPOA is an important first step, I also support efforts to blunt Iran's broader destabilizing influence throughout the Middle East. I oppose the continuation of Iran's ballistic missile testing, gross human rights abuses, as well as their sponsorship of terrorism. I highlight these issues because of my conviction that Iran is the world's largest sponsor of terrorism. The Iranian regime's recent provocations only serve to demonstrate that our current approach must be revisited in partnership with our Israeli and other allies abroad. Only by working together will we ensure American and Israeli security while advancing our strategic interests in the Middle East and throughout the globe.

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4). Should the U.S. increase, maintain or decrease the amount of foreign aid to Israel and other countries in the Middle East? Should the U.S. condition its aid for specific results? What does the U.S. benefit from its relationship with Israel?

In Congress, I look forward to working with my colleagues to protect existing American support for Israel's military and civil society by supporting the International Affairs Budget, the US-Israel Memorandum of Understanding and other similar policies. Specifically, I support the annual \$3.3 billion in security assistance and \$500 million in cooperative missile defense funding. I believe it is essential to continue to strengthen the existing American-Israeli strategic alliance, and I support American aid and investment in Israel and elsewhere in the region, including humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians.

At the same time, I believe being a strong ally and partner requires us to always encourage each other to live up to our common ideals. Both of our countries are beacons of democracy, but face similar challenges in the rise of ultra-right-wing forces who use rhetoric and tactics that undermine our shared values. With that in mind, I will always work to promote shared American-Israeli commitments to human rights and individual liberties. And I am proud of the work I've done as a member of the U.S. Army Reserve to train special operations troops on human rights and the laws of armed conflict.

The importance of the relationship between the United States and Israel cannot be overstated. Our shared values of democracy, human rights, and peace serve as an example for the region, and it is critical that the United States remain a firm ally of Israel and its security. As a United States Senator, and particularly as someone who has served in the Middle East, I will be an unflinching supporter of the strong bond between our two countries.