

THE WEEKLY PRINT

In the District, Judaism, politics and college hoops come together for Bryan Knapp; Pence confidant Tom Rose on the former vice president's 2024 prospects; Aryé Elfenbein wants to revolutionize how we consume fish; Morgan Harper's entry into Ohio Senate race shakes up Democratic primary; and Family of slain teenager makes headway in decades-old terror funding lawsuit

AUGUST 18, 2021

In the District, Judaism, politics and college hoops come together for Bryan Knapp

After the Ivy League canceled his senior season at Cornell, the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School alum is finishing his NCAA basketball career at GWU

By Gabby Deutch

For Bryan Knapp, playing basketball at The George Washington University is something of a homecoming, like hitting shots at your favorite gym or wearing your old high-school jersey.

It isn't just that the former Cornell guard is returning to his hometown to finish out his NCAA eligibility after the Ivy League canceled all sports during his senior year in Ithaca. It's that as a GW Colonial, he'll be taking the court at the university's Charles E. Smith Center — an arena that shares a namesake with the school where he developed his basketball chops.

"I loved the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School," Knapp told *Jewish Insider*. "And likewise, I've so far loved my experience at the Charles E. Smith Center. But it was a complete coincidence."

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 sent Knapp back home, as classrooms and training facilities at Cornell shut down. But when other teams began to return to campuses for practice last summer, Knapp was not among them; the Ivy League, of which Cornell is a member, announced in July 2020 that it would cancel all fall sports.

"It was really frustrating. We were the only conference in the country that didn't compete," Knapp, who is 22, recalled. He completed his senior year without basketball, graduating in May with a degree in political science.

Because he still has a year of eligibility left, Knapp now has another shot at finishing out his time in the NCAA. Off the court, he'll be pursuing a master's degree in sports management; on the court, he hopes to play well enough to keep open the possibility of a professional career.

"I've always had aspirations of playing professionally in Israel after college," Knapp said. (At least two other GW alumni have gone on to play in Israel — Moti Daniel, a 6-foot-7, Holon-born Israeli forward who played for the Israeli national basketball team in the 1980s and 90s, and Mike Hall, a 6-foot-8 forward who played one season for the Washington Wizards before an international career took him to Maccabi Ashdod.)

Knapp, who is 6-foot-1, finished his junior year at Cornell with an average of 7.1 points per game, a solid showing for D1 college ball's only current player from JDS,

as Knapp's alma mater is known around the Beltway. (At Cornell, he follows in the footsteps of the 6-foot-8 Eitan Chemerinski, who played for the Big Red from 2009 to 2013.) Knapp graduated from JDS in 2017 as its all-time top scorer, averaging 27 points per game, and leading the school to its first conference championship since 2004.

"I had a chance to transfer to a bigger school, to a more basketball-oriented school, after my sophomore year" of high school, Knapp recalled. But he decided to stay at JDS. "I thought it would be better to excel and to help lead our team to a championship, which we ultimately did in the Potomac Valley Athletic Conference my senior year."

Staying at JDS also allowed Knapp to develop interests beyond basketball. "I was in a play at one point. I was in a cappella. I was on the debate team. I was forced down these other avenues that otherwise, had I been at a more sports-centric school, I don't know that I would have had the time for," he explained.

Now that he is back in Washington, Knapp gets to spend a lot of time with his family. But he is also finally getting to know

Washington for the first time. Though he grew up in the Woodley Park neighborhood, JDS is located in nearby Rockville, Md. “Every morning, the commute was in the opposite direction. So I never really explored downtown. But it’s nice. It’s like being a tourist in my own city, which I enjoy,” said Knapp. He commented on how fun the Foggy Bottom neighborhood is — a comment with which some non-college-aged Washingtonians may disagree — and noted that he enjoys being a short walk or scooter ride away from the White House.

With his Greek roommate, who is also a member of the basketball team, Knapp has been getting to know Washington. “There’s something very funny about someone from Greece — someone from Athens — and someone from D.C. exploring D.C., both being equally clueless to the layout of downtown,” Knapp joked.

As he works toward his degree in sports management, Knapp is trying to keep in mind how to merge his master’s with his political science passion from his undergraduate years. “I wonder,” he questioned, “how I can take a political science background and apply it to the world of sports. I wonder if there’s room for connectivity there. And I think there is.”

Last fall, when Knapp found his schedule freed up without basketball, he and Jimmy Boheim, a teammate who is now finishing his NCAA career at Syracuse under his father, the legendary Syracuse basketball coach of the same name, launched a get-out-the-vote effort among Cornell student athletes. “It wasn’t easy, but it was worth it,

and we had an astonishing turnout in the end,” Knapp said.

“It was important for me to not tell people who to vote for but to tell people to vote,” he added. “If not for our efforts, a lot of student athletes wouldn’t have voted. And that didn’t sit well with me.”

Playing in Washington also offers Knapp a return to his political roots. “At Shabbat dinner at our house, or any house really, when we were growing up, we’d go, we’d catch up for 15 or 20 minutes, and then we dive straight into politics for the rest of the meal,” said Knapp. His father, Bill, is a partner at the prominent Democratic media firm SKDKnickerbocker — the first “K” is for Knapp — and he produced Michael Bloomberg’s television ads during the former New York City mayor’s short-lived presidential bid last year. Knapp’s sister Sam works for the Arizona Democratic Party.

Knapp is again a regular at his parents’ Shabbat table at their home in the Foxhall neighborhood north of Georgetown. “Judaism has always been part of our family,” he said. “I almost took it for granted. Everyone I talked to was Jewish, [and] when you get to college, that’s not the case. There are certain subtle overlaps and mannerisms and other day-to-day interactions that you have with Jewish kids your age that you don’t have with non-Jews your age.”

At Cornell, Knapp was active at Chabad. He also had other Jewish teammates at Cornell, as well as a Jewish assistant coach. At GW, he is the only Jewish player on the team, and he hopes to get involved with Chabad in Foggy Bottom as well. “There was

a daily dose of Judaism at Cornell, certainly, whereas at GW it’s a little bit different,” Knapp observed. At a recent team dinner, he declined to eat the pork that was served because he keeps kosher.

“Then I get to explain, ‘I’m Jewish. Look at my [Star of David] necklace. This is why I don’t eat pork.’ And so that was, I think, insightful for them. But it’s also rewarding for me. When those moments come about, I get to express something that I’m proud of,” said Knapp.

Knapp has not had to personally confront antisemitism, but he is used to probing questions — mostly curious and good-natured — from his Cornell teammates about his identity. In May 2021, when violence flared between Israel and Hamas, “they came to me asking hard questions, but important and pertinent questions, and I loved answering them,” he noted.

From the beginning of his time at Cornell, Judaism was an important part of Knapp’s identity, including on the team. “I never hid my Judaism in any way. The biggest example of that is to look at the roster — it says Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School under my name, that’s the very first thing you see on both the Cornell and GW roster. And I love that,” Knapp remarked. “I look forward to carrying that weight with me.”

He’ll bring that identity with him to the Charles E. Smith Center for GW’s home opener in November against Saint Francis University. And when he steps off the court, he’ll put his Star of David necklace back around his neck. ♦

AUGUST 11, 2021

Pence confidant Tom Rose on the former vice president’s 2024 prospects

The former vice president walks a delicate line as he weighs a presidential run

By Matthew Kassel

Former Vice President Mike Pence has struggled to regain firm standing within the Republican Party since he quietly vacated the White House following the violent Capitol siege

in which a mob of enraged rioters called for his swift execution. While Pence said he was “proud” of certifying the 2020 election results in bold defiance of his tempestuous former boss, the decision

remains deeply unpopular with former President Donald Trump’s most diehard supporters.”

Recent unflattering headlines — as well as a series of unpromising early polls, one

of which put the former vice president at a meager 1% among potential Republican presidential candidates — have underscored Pence's seemingly stigmatized status as he emerges, however tenuously, as a possible GOP contender in the 2024 primaries. "Pence flatlines as 2024 field takes shape," a *Politico* headline blared last month, followed just a few days later by another gut punch from the influential news site: "Trumpworld is already weighing veeps for 2024. Hint: It ain't Pence."

But on Tuesday, Pence was afforded a reprieve from the media slugfest when *Politico* broke the news of a star-studded GOP donor retreat hosted by the former vice president last week in Jackson Hole, Wyo., as part of an effort to raise money for his recently launched nonprofit, Advancing American Freedom. The event, wrote political reporter Alex Isenstadt, "is the first such gathering the former vice president has hosted since leaving the White House in January," with speakers and attendees including such GOP luminaries as House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), former White House advisor Kellyanne Conway, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow.

Pence, as it happens, has been kvelling over the well-attended conservative confab, which no doubt helped bolster his somewhat wobbly position as a GOP standard-bearer, at least among the party elite. "I just spoke with him this morning," Tom Rose, a former Pence senior advisor and a longtime friend and close confidante from the former vice president's native Indiana, told *Jewish Insider* in an interview on Tuesday afternoon. "He was thrilled."

"I think this was his single most successful event on a number of fronts, not simply fundraising," said Rose, who had planned to attend but was unable to because he was feeling under the weather. Still, he argued, the gathering "demonstrated the degree to which major American thinkers and funders respect" the former vice president "by virtue of the fact that they were willing to spend a weekend out of their summer" participating in the donor retreat. "From everything I hear," Rose told *JI*, "it was a very open, very direct and very unequivocal exchange of views and thoughts with some

of the leading conservative policymakers in the country."

While Pence carefully honed his reputation as a deferential partner during his time in the Trump administration, the 62-year-old Hoosier is now walking an equally delicate line: maintaining his loyalty to the former president, who remains the ostensible GOP kingmaker, while asserting his independence as a national party leader untethered by his White House history.

Lately, Pence has been keeping busy with speaking engagements, and in April he signed a book deal to write a political memoir for Simon & Schuster, to much controversy within the publishing company. On Wednesday, he penned a scathing opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal* lambasting the Biden administration's "disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan" as a "foreign-policy humiliation unlike anything our country has endured since the Iran hostage crisis."

Then there is his new political group, which he launched in April. "I think the purpose of Advancing American Freedom," Rose mused, "is to ensure that the vice president has the resources necessary to continue to influence the national debate as constructively as possible."

Such varied activity suggests that Pence is keeping his options open as he navigates an uncertain political landscape further unsettled by the possibility of a Trump 2024 re-election bid — one the former president continues to tease without making any direct commitment in either direction.

Meanwhile, other potential presidential contenders including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis as well as Sens. Tim Scott (R-SC), Tom Cotton (R-AR), South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem and former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley could make for a crowded field.

Still, Rose said Pence's "options are as wide as the horizons."

"He can continue to convene leaders on critical topics, he can write, he can speak, he can support Republican candidates," Rose said of the former vice president. "There's no limit to what he can do and what he is doing. He's actually extraordinarily busy — too busy, in my opinion — right now. But he will remain an influential national leader for as long as he wants to be one."

Rose, who has known Pence — an

Indiana governor and congressman before he ascended to the vice presidency — for more than three decades, no longer holds any official advisory role with the former vice president. But they remain close. While Rose, 58, said he hopes Pence will run for president next cycle, he speculated that Trump would "have a clean field to the nomination" if he decides to enter the race.

"I would strongly doubt that the vice president would actively run against President Trump in a Republican primary," Rose said, repeating his assertion for effect in a phone interview from Indianapolis. "I would strongly doubt that that would happen. If the president decides not to run," he added, "I think the vice president is an incredibly serious candidate."

The former senior advisor and trusted vice presidential ally acknowledged that Pence's commitment to certifying the election results might be a point of contention if he seeks the presidential nomination. "I think that's a fair analysis," he said. "I'm not sure it's correct. I think it's unfortunate."

But he defended the former vice president's actions while clarifying that the certification in no way amounted to a wholesale rejection of Trump's presidency.

"I'll say that Vice President Pence was equally proud of his four-year support for the president and his agenda as he was for fulfilling his constitutional duties on the sixth of January, and they're not mutually exclusive," Rose told *JI*, adding that Pence and Trump continue to speak despite any outward appearance of lingering hostility. "I'm not going to attempt to put words in the vice president's mouth. I'll let him speak to that when and how he so chooses," Rose said. "But the notion that their relationship was broken, I think, is just not correct. It's just not true."

"He was, is and will remain an ardent defender of the president's agenda, of the president's accomplishments, of the administration's accomplishments," Rose said of Pence. "It's just that there's a disagreement which, I guess, carries over about that day, and I think history will answer that in due course."

"The pluses of the Trump administration infinitely outweighed the minuses," Rose clarified, "and January 6 was was was

certainly a minus.”

Rose, an Orthodox Jew and ardent supporter of Israel, reserved his most enthusiastic praise for the Trump administration’s Middle East foreign policy achievements, including its involvement in brokering a series of historic agreements between the Jewish state and a number of Arab nations.

“The administration, the president, the vice president, vis à vis their relationship for the State of Israel, their support for the State of Israel, the Jewish people, I think, will be the ultimate lasting and eternal legacy of

this administration,” Rose declared. “It’s epic. Absolutely epic.”

As for his old boss and close friend in particular, Rose singled out a historic 2018 Israel address in which Pence became the first American vice president to speak before the Knesset.

“The preparation of that speech, the reception of that speech was truly a monumental event in the history of American-Israeli relations,” Rose told JI. “I’m unabashedly proud to have played a very small role in helping him craft what even his critics argue was the most pro-

Zionist speech ever delivered by a foreign leader from that rostrum.”

Rose, a former radio host and publisher of the *Jerusalem Post*, is engaged with a number of professional tasks now that he is no longer working for the government, including newspaper investments and consulting for private equity firms.

But he said he would be eager to drop what he is doing and return to working for Pence should the former vice president seek public office again. “I’d love to,” Rose told JI. “When he’s president.” ♦

AUGUST 16, 2021

Aryé Elfenbein wants to revolutionize how we consume fish

Wildtype’s salmon sashimi, created from just a handful of salmon cells, could be groundbreaking for health-conscious, environmentally aware and kosher consumers

By Gabby Deutch

Aryé Elfenbein has glimpsed a brave-new-world vision of the kosher restaurant of the future: Glance down the menu past the grilled lamb chops, the Porterhouse steak and even the vegan burger, and you’ll find sustainable dishes with “wild-caught fish, farmed fish and plant-based alternatives.”

Then, if all goes as planned for the cardiologist who moonlights as a cell engineer, you’ll find “cultivated seafood” of the kind he and his partner are creating in a San Francisco lab — sashimi-grade salmon grown from just a few salmon cells.

“I’m not the first cardiologist to work on this, actually,” Elfenbein told *Jewish Insider*, laughing. Launched in 2016, the San Francisco-based Wildtype joined the growing ecosystem of startups seeking to create cultivated, or lab-grown, meat — and the first cultivated hamburger was completed in 2013 by a Dutch cardiologist. “It is kind of a strange coincidence there,” he said. “I don’t know of any other people from medicine [in the field].”

Wildtype, which has succeeded in its

efforts to create cultivated salmon, joins the ranks of a small but growing field of companies seeking to grow animal protein almost from scratch, using just a few cells taken from a live fish. Then, through a complex scientific process, these handful of cells become a whole piece of fish — fat, muscle and all. “When we began, I think there were maybe three or four other startups in the world working on this,” Elfenbein said of he and his co-founder, Justin Kolbeck. “Now there’s, I think, more than 60.”

Along with the rise of animal protein meat substitutes, like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat, both businesses and consumers now have an interest in creating protein that is more sustainable and healthier.

“I imagine a future where if you go to a restaurant,” Elfenbein explained, “there would be many things on the menu, everything from wild-caught — and hopefully that would be sustainably wild-caught — fish... Then there could be farmed fish, there could be plant-based alternatives and then there could be cultivated seafood like we’re producing and maybe some totally

new category.”

The growing industry has implications for people who keep kosher, too. “For the kosher consumer, [cultivated] meat — even as a potential — theoretically is very huge,” said Rabbi Menachem Genack, CEO of the Orthodox Union’s Kashrut Division. For kosher animals, like cows, the cells would have to come from the animal once it is slaughtered in a ritually kosher way. At that point, a mashgiach would likely have to observe the production process. But if those steps are taken, the cultivated meat would be kosher.

“You’d get a much higher yield,” Genack said, a big advantage when kashrut-observant Jews can usually only eat 20% of a cow. “It should have a significant impact for the kosher consumer and of course, it has other advantages ecologically, in terms of climate.”

And for cultivated fish, kosher certification is likely to be much easier. Fish is not slaughtered like an animal, so there does not need to be any observation when the fish is killed. And a kosher consumer can go to any grocery store or fish market

and buy fish without a hechsher (kosher certification), as long as it's "identifiable that it's from the kosher species," said Genack. "The OU's position has been that salmon, since it has its own unique pink color, even though it doesn't have a scale on it, people going to the store can identify it as salmon." Unlike beef, the cultivation of salmon in a lab would not need to be observed the entire time by a *meshgiach*.

While doing his residency and fellowship at the Yale School of Medicine, Elfenbein met Kolbeck, a business student at Yale. Both developed an interest in sustainable food and cultivated meat for different reasons.

Kolbeck "had been a diplomat and worked in the U.S. Foreign Service in places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, these very food insecure parts of the world, and really wanted to do something after finishing his MBA that addressed that in some way," Elfenbein explained.

Born in Petah Tikvah, Elfenbein left Israel when he was young, and grew up mostly in Australia. After attending Brandeis University as an undergraduate, he went to Dartmouth for his Ph.D. and MD.

"Most of my work for the Ph.D. was done in Japan, around the same time and in the same place that the discovery was made that we could create stem cells from ordinary skin cells," Elfenbein explained. "Before then, there was a moratorium on [stem-cell] research in the U.S., because the only source that was available was from embryos, and this took all of the ethical issues off the table." These groundbreaking discoveries in stem-cell research would have implications for Wildtype many years down the road.

Several years after leaving Japan, Elfenbein was back home in Australia on a rare vacation from his medical residency. He saw that much of the rainforest near where he grew up was now used to raise livestock. "This question came to me of, 'Do we need animals to produce meat?' Which is a very strange question," he acknowledged. "It just sort of stayed with me, this question of, Can there be a more efficient and a better and a more humane and more sustainable way to produce meat?"

By 2016, a handful of companies were already working on creating cultivated meat products, but no one else was really focused on seafood. For a scientist like Elfenbein,

taking on an almost entirely new research area presented a thrill. But there were other concerns, too.

"There was just this emerging awareness of what was happening — what is happening — in our oceans," Elfenbein said, referring to pollution and overfishing, "as well as the fact that from here in San Francisco to Alaska's salmon country, and in all of the little streams that are out here, where there used to be salmon all the time, and now there are none."

Part of the draw of working with seafood had to do with Elfenbein's medical background. "As a cardiologist, I wanted to create something that was healthier, so we didn't want to just make ground beef," he noted.

Now that plant-based meat substitutes from Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat have gone mainstream, it's easy to see how more sustainable alternatives to traditional meat or seafood can translate to heavy profits. Reuters reported in April that Impossible Foods was exploring the possibility of an initial public offering next year with a potential valuation at \$10 billion.

But back in 2016, when Wildtype was approaching venture capitalists, Elfenbein and Kolbeck's pitch was harder.

"It was easy to find people who found this idea absolutely fascinating and could see the vision, and could recognize the problems in our food system and could very easily understand how this could be one solution," said Elfenbein. "That said, the economics of producing this type of food in the way that we were describing was very, very difficult for people to think to embrace in an investment sense."

He and Kolbeck had no prototype when they approached investors, and they also had no idea how long it would take to create the product they were after.

"No, we didn't know," Elfenbein said, when asked if he and his team were certain, at the time they launched, that they would successfully achieve their goal. Then he revised his answer: "I think we knew, but what was really unclear was, on what timeline? And in particular, would it be possible on the kinds of timelines that early-stage investors would expect?"

It took just a year and a half to create a prototype, though it was primitive. Now,

after honing the product, they have created salmon sashimi: An *Axios* writer who tasted it gave the Wildtype salmon a B+ grade, "much better than your average weekday takeout restaurant."

Wildtype is building a production facility in San Francisco that will also hold a tasting room, where consumers can buy the fish after it gains approval from the Food and Drug Administration. "Our conversations with them have been extremely productive, very transparent [and] helpful," Elfenbein said. But as Wildtype looks to gain regulatory approval, Elfenbein has looked to his home country for inspiration.

"Israel really is on the forefront of this field, not just in terms of the startups that have emerged there, but I think also in terms of the government's willingness to engage in terms of constructing a regulatory framework," Elfenbein pointed out. "As a very generally progressive society, it's one that has embraced technologies such as these."

For now, don't expect to see Wildtype's salmon at the local fish counter. Even when it first launches, the fish for an eight-piece sushi roll will cost somewhere between \$50 and \$100. ♦

Morgan Harper's entry into Ohio Senate race shakes up Democratic primary

The former congressional candidate will go up against Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH) in next year's Democratic Senate primary

By Matthew Kassel

Morgan Harper, a progressive Democrat who ran an unsuccessful campaign to unseat Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH) last year in Columbus, is now setting her sights on the Senate. On Wednesday, the former congressional hopeful declared her candidacy in Ohio's upcoming open-seat election to replace Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), who is retiring at the end of his term in 2022.

"Ohio needs fresh new leadership in Washington and a new game plan built from the ground up, door by door, block by block," Harper said in a fiery campaign kickoff video. "They're counting Ohio out. They're counting me out," she added. "But they don't know the power that lies in you and the fight that lies in me."

Her announcement, which had been expected, sets up a possibly contentious Democratic primary showdown with Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH), the longtime Youngstown congressman who jumped into the race this past April. Until this week, he had been running unopposed while pulling in a sizable \$3.1 million fundraising haul, according to the latest filings from the Federal Election Commission.

Still, Harper, 38, is facing potentially long odds as she mounts her first statewide bid, where she will need to build name recognition, rack up endorsements and overcome a steep fundraising deficit even as she abjures donations from corporate political action committees.

Last cycle, Harper ran an aggressive grassroots primary challenge against Beatty in Ohio's solidly blue 3rd Congressional District, raising nearly \$1 million while earning endorsements from prominent progressive groups like Justice Democrats and the Working Families Party. But she was

still soundly defeated by a margin of nearly 37 points as the emerging coronavirus upended the election, which was conducted largely by mail.

More recently, progressive candidates have endured a series of stinging electoral losses in places like New York, New Orleans and Cleveland, where Shontel Brown, a moderate county councilwoman and Democratic Party chair, prevailed over Nina Turner, a former Ohio state senator and presidential campaign surrogate for Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) backed by Justice Democrats.

Beatty, the powerful chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, was one of several mainstream Democrats who rallied behind Brown in the hotly contested open-seat special election that came to embody a deepening rift between moderates and progressives in the House.

Whether the Senate primary will play out along similar lines remains to be seen. Earlier this month, amid rumors that Harper's Senate announcement was imminent, Beatty threw her weight behind Ryan, a 2020 presidential candidate who is now attracting widespread support from the Democratic establishment.

But while Ryan, 48, is widely viewed as a centrist — having previously expressed resistance to such left-wing agenda items as Medicare for All and the Green New Deal — the Ohio-born Senate candidate "has worked to burnish his own progressive credentials in recent months," according to Paul Beck, a professor emeritus of political science at The Ohio State University.

"He has perfect voting records on Planned Parenthood issues and labor union issues," Beck told *Jewish Insider*, "which fits his district."

The congressman's strong labor

connections will no doubt be helpful as he seeks to maintain his advantage over Harper, a community organizer who casts herself as a champion of workers' rights.

"From now through next November, Tim will be taking his relentless focus on workers to every corner of Ohio," Izzi Levy, a spokesperson for the Ryan campaign, emphasized in a statement to *Jl* on Wednesday, "building on the momentum he's already earned and continuing to win the support of Ohioans in his fight to cut workers in on the deal in the U.S. Senate."

Harper, a graduate of Stanford Law School, previously worked as a senior advisor in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau during the Obama administration. Before announcing her Senate run, Harper was a director of policy and advocacy at the American Economic Liberties Project and helped found Stand Up Columbus, a local activist group.

It is unclear if Harper will secure another endorsement from Justice Democrats, which could make the race more competitive while lending her campaign a veneer of institutional gravitas within the national progressive fundraising community. (The group did not respond to a request for comment from *Jl*.)

But even without an imprimatur from Justice Democrats, Harper's long-shot campaign shouldn't be counted out, said Nathaniel Swigger, a political scientist at The Ohio State University at Newark.

"If Harper can raise money and she has a 20% chance at winning while she can highlight progressive issues, then it's probably worthwhile," Swigger told *Jl*. "Ryan is the favorite, but he could stumble. Harper could tap into young voters. There's so much money sloshing around in electoral politics right now that the standard for

'viable' is pretty low."

While the Democratic primary field could expand as the race progresses, experts questioned whether any future candidates with enough standing to seriously contest Ryan would emerge.

Meanwhile, the Republican primary is jam-packed, including former GOP state party chair Jane Timken, Cleveland-based investment banker Mike Gibbons, former Ohio State Treasurer Josh Mandel and author and venture capitalist J.D. Vance — all of whom have been making vociferous overtures to the Trump wing of the Republican Party.

In her first video ad, Harper indicated that she intends to focus in part on turning out Black voters in Ohio, a pivotal battleground state that represents one of a smattering of opportunities for Democrats to expand their razor-thin majority in the Senate next year.

The Columbus native, who is Black, positions herself as a staunch advocate for such domestic concerns as universal healthcare, racial justice and curbing climate change — the sine qua nons of any progressive platform. But her foreign policy views aren't so plainly articulated, and she makes no mention of international matters of any sort on the issues page of her campaign site.

During her last campaign, Jewish community leaders in Columbus took issue with Harper's seemingly ambiguous stance on Israel, not least because of her affiliation with Justice Democrats, which has characterized Israel as a "human rights violator" and supports conditioning American foreign security assistance to the Jewish state.

Despite repeated requests for clarification from JI at the time, Harper's campaign would not confirm whether she agreed with Justice Democrats on Israel, in contrast to several of her far-left allies who are more openly critical of the Jewish state.

"She is not so clear on her positions when it comes to things like Israel," Justin Shaw, director of Jewish community relations at the nonprofit organization JewishColumbus, said of Harper. "We don't know much of where she stands solidly because I don't think she's clearly defined her positions."

In an interview with JI last year, Harper expressed an affinity for the local Jewish community and said she was interested in visiting Israel. She also did not immediately rule out the possibility of attending AIPAC's annual policy conference, which Sanders boycotted in 2020, accusing the pro-Israel group of providing a "platform" for "leaders who express bigotry."

But she seemed reluctant to discuss her views on Israel in much depth, often resorting to vague bromides that revealed little of substance about her approach to the Middle East.

"I believe people in Israel have human rights and I respect that human rights are something that need to be preserved all over the world," Harper said in March 2020 at a public library in Columbus after participating in a candidate forum. "My platform is primarily focused on the rights of those living in the 3rd District, but one of the tenets of my life, I would say, is that until all of us are free, none of us are free — and I am committed to making sure that rights are protected."

As the conversation progressed, a spokesperson for Harper, sitting nearby, interjected. "She agreed to talk about the campaign and the race here in the 3rd District," the spokesperson informed JI, though no such agreement had been made beforehand. "So if you could kind of allow her space to talk about what she's planning to do for the people here and maybe save the foreign policy for when she's elected, that would be our preference."

Avoiding such discussions as a Senate candidate will presumably be more difficult for Harper. Asked directly by JI on Wednesday if she supports conditioning aid to Israel — as do several progressive candidates now running for Congress with backing from Justice Democrats — Harper ignored the question entirely.

"Israel has a right to exist," she told JI through a spokesperson. "So does Palestine. I firmly believe in the peace process. Like many, I have been increasingly concerned about the actions taken by former Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu and his government that undermined the peace process, and I am also concerned about any exacerbation of violence. I am eager to see what the new government in Israel does

to rectify past wrongs and move forward toward a lasting peace."

Harper was somewhat more forthcoming on the topic of Jewish community outreach.

"The Jewish community has always been a part of my own community from an early age," she said in written comments to JI. "Growing up on the east side of Columbus, I spent summers at the Jewish Community Center working with children with disabilities. I'm proud of the work we did in our last campaign to engage voters in the Jewish community, especially in the neighborhoods near where I grew up, for example, in Bexley."

Still, the organized Jewish community in Ohio looks more likely to coalesce behind Ryan, described by local leaders as a strong supporter of Israel who has maintained close contact with Jewish voters throughout his time in Congress.

"The congressman has always had an open door," Bonnie Burdman, executive director of community relations and government affairs at the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, told JI. "We see eye to eye on many things. We don't see eye to eye on everything. But he's always been open to listening. He's never denied us a meeting."

In May, amid escalating violence between Israel and Hamas, Ryan condemned what he described as "the unjustifiable rocket attacks by Hamas" in a strongly worded statement. "Israel has the right to defend itself and take the necessary steps to stop the attacks," he went on. "The events of the past days demonstrate the danger Israel faces every day. These Hamas attacks endanger the lives and safety of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians and only further highlight why we must continue to strive for peace."

While the congressman's comments sparked protests outside his district office in Warren, Jewish community members were "very appreciative" of his support for Israel, according to Burdman. "We let him know that."

Howie Beigelman, executive director of the nonprofit Ohio Jewish Communities, said the Democratic Senate primary "is shaping up to be a fight between two progressive candidates," only one of whom has established long-standing relationships with Jewish community members as an

elected official.

"Ohio voters already know Tim Ryan," Beigelman told JI. "For the Jewish community he's someone with a voting

record on Israel, as well as on Jewish community security needs, and on our other domestic policy priorities such as seniors, education, workforce and healthcare."

Beigelman, whose organization represents Ohio's eight Jewish federations, had no direct comment on Harper. ♦

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Family of slain teenager makes headway in decades-old terror funding lawsuit

The family of David Boim is attempting to collect a \$156 million judgement

By Melissa Weiss

David Boim was 17 years old when he was shot and killed by a Hamas terrorist at a West Bank bus stop in May 1996.

The legal battle waged by his parents to hold accountable U.S.-based organizations that contributed funds to Hamas has lasted far longer than the teenager's life.

But Stanley and Joyce Boim scored a legal victory on Monday when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit reversed a dismissal of the case that had prevented the family from moving forward to collect a \$156 million judgement from the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) and the Holy Land Foundation (HLF) — organizations they claim had shuttered and reopened under a new name in order to avoid payment.

The Boim family had initially been awarded a \$52 million judgement payable by IAP, also known as the American Muslim Society, and HLF.

"The Boim legal precedent that was established has become the basic bedrock, the key leading precedent, that these victims' cases have been based on," Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights President Alyza Lewin, an attorney for the Boims for more than 20 years along with her father, Nathan Lewin, told JI. "And that's why when you look at the amicus briefs that were filed in this case, many of them, these lawyers who have handled cases on behalf of victims of terror, rely on the Boim precedent."

The payment was tripled by the Anti-Terrorism Act, enacted in the early 1990s, which increased the amount of damages awarded to victims or terror or their relatives.

Shortly after the 2004 ruling, IAP/AMS and HLF closed their doors. Within a year of the shuttering of both groups, the nonprofit American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) was created, and hired former staff from both organizations. In addition, AMP began holding annual conferences at the same time and featuring the same speakers, attendees and management as previous IAP/AMS conferences.

"When we realized that they were essentially the same organizations under different names," explained Daniel Schlessinger, an attorney representing the Boim family, "we filed our lawsuit, in 2017, under this 'alter ego theory.'"

A judge in Illinois had initially ruled that AMP could not be considered an "alter ego" of the earlier organizations, a classification usually reserved for corporate cases in which a company shuts down, only to transfer assets, institutional knowledge and clientele, among other things, to a newly created company.

The Boim family encountered multiple dismissals, appealing or asking for reconsideration — winning each time.

Following Monday's ruling, the Boim family's attorneys will attempt to prove in court the direct linkage between AMP and IAP/AMS.

Jonathan Schanzer, senior vice president at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies who has spent years tracking terror financing, called the decision "a significant victory."

"It's a reversal of the previous decision that opens the floodgates of discovery,"

Schanzer told JI. "A lot more can now be learned about the defendants. The outcome is still far from certain. And the road ahead will be long. But at least we now know where this case is going: forward." ♦