Dale Holness  
Candidate for Florida 20th

1) What is the one policy issue or area that you are most passionate about?

For the past 17 years of my life spent as an elected public servant I have remained committed to economic growth and development that equitably benefits all members of our community. In this race to succeed my dear friend and mentor, Congressman Alcee Hastings, I have campaigned under the slogan of "Prosperity for All" to signify my commitment to prioritizing economic growth for every resident of the district and beyond. For far too many people in the district, inequities that disproportionately impact businesses, families and communities based on an individual’s gender, race, religion or sexuality have inhibited America’s continued growth and shared prosperity. In 2020 Citi Financial published a report of an economic analysis on the economic cost of racial inequities, which stated that America's GDP lost out at least $16 trillion of economic growth over the last twenty years, and if we were to implement solutions to these inequities, we could grow the economy by over $5 trillion over the next five years. Fact-based solutions that address America’s historical inequities and contribute to economic growth will continue to be a priority of mine as a member of Congress.

Further, I am committed to increasing America’s economic growth as a member of Congress by enhancing legislation and directing increased technical and funding support to small businesses, especially those that are women and minority-owned. Over the past few years America has lost ground to China’s rise as a global superpower due to their strategic efforts and commitment to global trade. If we are to effectively combat their emerging global dominance, we must continue to work to support America’s businesses to sell more of our goods and services to the remaining ninety-five percent of the world’s population living beyond our borders to protect our national interests and promote democracy abroad. As a Broward County Commissioner and 2020 Mayor, I’ve worked relentlessly in this effort through my creation of the Florida International Trade & Cultural Expo (FITCE). In 2019, over 2,000 attendees participated in what has become the largest trade & cultural expo in the southeastern United States, including former international presidents, international business leaders, and local, state, and federal trade agencies. In 2019, Broward County received a U.S. Presidential Award dating back to President John F. Kennedy for its efforts to support local businesses’ export to the rest of the world.
2) Which organizations or leaders do you consult with for advice on policy? Are there any whose views particularly align with yours?

As an elected public servant, I have always committed my efforts of community building and legislation to the direct needs and concerns of the people I serve. In accomplishing this task, I regularly consult and build relationships with faith, business, industry and community leaders to gain greater perspective on issues and policies before making a decision. Before his passing, my dear friend and mentor, Congressman Alcee Hastings, who endorsed me before his passing, was a close advisor of mine. Additionally, I regularly consult leaders and organizations such as Mario Cartaya, Bernie Friedman, Yoram Iszak, Robert Vaughn, Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Michael Garcia, Shaheewa Jarrett Gelin, Marleine Bastien, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC), Realtor’s Association, local Homeowner Associations, the NAACP, Urban League, Hispanic Unity, and other elected officials. As leaders and organizations that I regularly consult with for advice, our views are generally aligned on most issues.

3) Recent statistics from the FBI indicate that Jews are the victims of more than half of all religiously motivated hate crimes in the U.S. This uptick in antisemitism coincides with a robust debate about the role of policing in American society, with some arguing for abolishing or defunding the police, while others advocate for limited reforms or preserving the status quo. What is your position on police reform and — in light of that — how do you believe the government should address violent antisemitism?

Optional: Describe any efforts you’ve made to combat antisemitism within your own party, and how you’ve held your political allies accountable for any instances of antisemitism.

The role of policing is an issue that I’ve continuously worked together with organizations such as The NAACP and law enforcement on since becoming an elected public servant in 2004. In this effort I’ve been successful in passing legislation in Broward County to expand our juvenile and adult civil citation programs. Far too often, data has shown that our young and poor populations are disproportionately caught up in the criminal justice system due to non-violent petty misdemeanors such as small amounts of marijuana possession, leaving a permanent roadblock on the individual’s future job prospects and opportunities. In Broward County I worked to eliminate one of these barriers by passing a ban-the-box ordinance eliminating the question about an applicant’s criminal record until after they’ve had the opportunity and are selected as a final candidate for the position. Additionally, far too many individuals have been
locked into the criminal justice system due in large part to issues concerning their mental health. According to Broward County reports and data from the Broward Sheriff's Office, the single-largest line item in the county’s over $6 billion budget is $300 million for Broward County jails with forty-seven percent of inmates receiving some form of treatment with a psychotropic drug. We should not continue to be locking these people up for minor, non-violent misdemeanor offenses at a cost of one-hundred sixty-one dollars per night to taxpayers, but rather, invest in resources to help them get their health and lives back in order. As a member of Congress, I will not recommend abolishing or defunding the police, but rather restructuring their roles, procedures and responsibilities to account for issues regarding mental health and gender, racial and religious biases.

Antisemitism and hate have no place in our society. As a mob stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6th with some yielding antisemitic symbolism and as we witnessed countless acts of violence upon members of the Jewish community, it is a constant reminder that we must continue to work together protect all communities, especially minority communities from attacks of hate. As a member of Congress, I will speak out against hate crimes and work to support the heftiest penalties and increased resources to identify and prosecute incidences of violent antisemitism as a federal hate crime.

4) Do you believe that Israel’s role and location in the Middle East is a strategic asset to the United States? Why or why not.

Yes, Israel is undeniably a strategic asset to the United States. Characterized as our closest and most reliable ally in a volatile region of the world, as the sole democracy in the Middle East, and as a haven for the Jewish community, Israel provides unparalleled opportunity to advance mutually beneficial interests that impact our daily lives. With militant terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, ISIS-K and others creating regional instability, protecting Israel and our mutual interests are of critical importance to preserving America’s national security efforts. Through America’s relationship with Israel, not only are we able to combat terrorism and prevent the transfer of weapons of mass destruction, but also, advance shared national interests in the region as well as globally.

As a member of Congress, the late Congressman Alcee Hastings always stood up for the Israeli and Jewish community and as a member of Congress, I will remain committed to building upon his legacy by being a strong supporter of Israel.
5) On September 23, 2021, the United States House of Representatives voted 420-9, with two members voting present, to provide $1 billion to Israel to replenish the Iron Dome missile defense system. If you were in Congress, how would you have voted and why?

As a member of Congress, I would have voted in favor of the $1 billion to Israel to replenish their Iron Dome missile defense system. This all-weathered system will allow for Israel to intercept incoming missiles increasingly targeted at temples, religious sites and innocent civilians. As an ally, America should invest in this system not only as a means of protecting Israel, but our national security interests as well. Israel must be able to defend itself from both internal and external attacks and threats.

6) 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 foreign aid based on specific results?

The U.S. should at a minimum maintain the amount of foreign aid to Israel, Egypt and other countries in the Middle East. Should Israel find itself under attack, I will be in favor of increasing appropriations. Because of Israel’s geo-strategic significance in the region, we must be ready to allocate financial assistance in the 150 Account and the Economic Support Funds (ESF). I am not in favor of enhanced restrictions on aid to Israel.

7) What is your view of the Abraham Accords, which has brought Arab countries including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan into a warm peace with Israel? Do you believe there will be more peace in the Middle East? If so, what will it take?

The Abraham Accords pave the path to peace through recognition and engagement rather than prolonging the conflict by seeking to isolate and boycott the Jewish state. These historic accords are made possible through a strong U.S.-Israel relationship cemented by decades of bipartisan congressional support for Israel’s security. The North South agreement in Sudan has allowed peace to be codified in that region. When Sudan is secure, we will not see a spillover of conflict into contiguous states which only increases instability.

August 13th of this year marked one year since the announcement of the Abraham Accords agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Subsequently, Israel reached agreements with three additional Arab states—Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco. The Abraham Accords have resulted in historic diplomatic achievements,
people-to-people engagement, and bilateral cooperation including significant commercial agreements. The impact of the Abraham Accords—made possible by a strong U.S.-Israel partnership—demonstrates that engaging with Israel creates opportunities for peace, prosperity and progress.

The United States should continue to support the expansion of the Abraham Accords and encourage other Arab and Muslim states—as well as the Palestinians—to follow suit. Ample opportunities exist for enhanced cooperation between Israel and states in Africa, the Persian Gulf, and East Asia. Lastly, Palestinian leaders should re-engage with Israel and end their boycott of direct talks. Such increased cooperation will benefit America as our regional allies and follow in the footsteps of Egypt and Jordan to pursue common interests and increase the prospect for broader Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian peace.

8) Do you support or oppose a return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran? In your view, what is the role of ‘leverage’ in these negotiations and is the U.S. using its leverage effectively?

Yes, I support the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran that was signed by President Obama. Iran remains Israel’s and America’s greatest long-term threat in the Middle East. A nuclear Iran would pose a direct danger to American interests and an existential threat to Israel. The U.S. must be committed to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapon capabilities.

Since Congress completed its consideration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, Democrats have worked together on numerous occasions in efforts to permanently prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and address the regime’s ballistic missile program, terrorism, regional aggression and human rights violations. Congress has adopted legislation to increase sanctions on Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC); and entities aiding Iran’s Syrian tyrannical ally, Bashar al-Assad. Congress has also backed extending the U.N. arms embargo on Iran and ensuring Israel has the means necessary to defend itself from Iranian aggression. As a member of Congress, I will work to continue to be steadfast in opposition to Iran’s destabilizing behavior through strategic sanctions and support a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.
9) Government entities should not have to do business with entities that engage in immoral practices or espouse values that are inconsistent with society’s

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other

10) I support public efforts to divest from companies that engage in BDS

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other

11) Anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other

12) The United States should use all means available to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon

   Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Other