



## Sarah Godlewski U.S.-Israel Relationship Position Paper November 2021

My name is Sarah Godlewski, and I am running for the U.S. Senate in Wisconsin. I currently serve as the State Treasurer after getting elected statewide in 2018 while winning with larger margins than the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General. I am also a fifth generation Wisconsinite with a background in investing in and helping grow small businesses, the lifeblood of our economy. I received a bachelor's degree from George Mason University in Peace and Conflict Resolution, which included programming on the conflicts in the Middle East. I spent nearly a decade working with the Pentagon under both Republican and Democratic Administrations as a project manager and consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton. I was also a National Security Fellow at the Air War College.

My background in national security, peace and conflict resolution, and the creation and nurturing of small businesses gives me a unique perspective on the U.S.-Israel relationship. Israel is not only a critical trading partner to Wisconsin and our country, it is one of our strongest allies in the world and the only democracy in the Middle East. **That unbreakable relationship is why as Wisconsin's next United States Senator, I will always protect and promote the U.S.-Israel friendship.**

As a longtime volunteer with UNICEF, I have grown to appreciate one of the great traditions of the Jewish people -- Tikkun Olam. That same spirit of repairing the world inspired my work as the Co-Chair of the USA Advocacy Committee for UNICEF, where I saw firsthand the importance of humanitarian partnerships between states, NGOs, and local actors in order to protect human rights and expand health and economic opportunity.

**That commitment to bettering the world is also why I support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish, democratic state, and why as Senator, I will protect and promote our partnership while strengthening relationships across the Middle East to secure prosperity for all. It's also how I know that the Israeli people desire peace with their neighbors above all else, and why we share this fundamental belief: for the benefit of Israel, the United States, and the Palestinian people, I am in favor of seeking a peaceful and equitable two-state solution.**



## U.S.-Israel Relationship

As part of my peace and conflict resolution studies, I learned about the Jewish people's unique history as a community in diaspora. Absent their homeland for thousands of years, Jews were forced to practice their faith in private to avoid the type of persecution seen during the Spanish Inquisition. Nazis and their allies and collaborators then inflicted incomparable horrors upon the Jewish people, systematically murdering 6 million men, women, and children. Despite the Holocaust, to this day there are still corners of the world where Jews must practice their faith in private. Remarkably, this experience as a persecuted people not only unites Jews around the world but also inspires the Jewish community to stand with other oppressed peoples, regardless of race, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation. I find inspiring the Jewish community's resilience and commitment to standing with other persecuted peoples through the work of organizations like the Anti-Defamation League, and through local, national, and global efforts to embrace immigrants and refugees.

**As Senator, I will stand arm-in-arm with the Jewish community and serve as a strong voice in calling out hate and anti-Semitism.** In Wisconsin, hate crimes and anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions have seen a precipitous rise, along with the rest of the country. It is simply unacceptable, and I believe it is incumbent upon us as elected leaders to call out hate when we see it. Wisconsin has a small (under 50,000) but strong Jewish community, and I pledge to be a strong advocate in the face of anti-Semitism.

**That's also why I am opposed to the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and any attempts to delegitimize Israel as a state.** The BDS movement is a form of anti-Semitism in and of itself that destabilizes the region. There is no question that Israel has a right to exist, and any efforts to undermine Israel's existence will not further a peaceful solution for anyone in the Middle East. I recognize the injustices Palestinians have suffered, and I believe the instability created by the global BDS movement puts any mitigation of those injustices out of reach.



**I am grateful that Israel is a strong ally to women and embraces its LGBTQ community.**

Those values cannot be overstated, and they are fundamental to me, my campaign, and our state. Just over 50 years ago, a Wisconsinite-turned-Israeli broke Israel's highest glass ceiling and became Israel's first woman prime minister. PM Golda Meir still serves as an inspiration to me and other women running for high office around the world.

**The economic and cultural ties between Wisconsin, the U.S., and Israel contribute greatly to the world.** Between 1981 and 2020, 41 projects, a cumulative \$10.1 million, have been funded in Wisconsin by the Binational Agriculture and Research Development Foundation (BARD). These collaborative projects between Wisconsin and Israeli scientists have helped to address critical agriculture issues facing both countries. In 2019, Wisconsin exports to Israel totaled \$100 million. Both Democratic and Republican governors in Wisconsin have understood the importance of collaboration with Israel in important fields such as water research.

Moreover, our countries' cooperation on scientific, defense, technology, and cultural innovation has significantly strengthened our relationship and improved both of our nations. The 2016 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a clear sign of the enduring commitment that the United States has to the Israeli people. As Israel's largest trading partner, the United States must continue to improve trade and continue scientific and cultural cooperation with Israel as one of our strongest allies in the world. That includes U.S. companies building more research and development centers in Israel and Israel operating additional manufacturing centers in the U.S. It also includes collaborating to drive health innovation and combat climate change, the latter being one of the greatest challenges of my generation and a threat to the generations to come.

### Safety and Security in the Region

As the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel faces serious and pressing security threats, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the dangerous potential of a nuclear-capable Iran. Our country's friendship with Israel has existed for as long as Israel itself has existed, and remains critical to their security and regional stability. **That's why as Senator, I will uphold our country's long standing tradition by ensuring our commitment to supporting Israel's**



**defense is ironclad.** That includes helping Israel to maintain its Qualitative Military Edge (QME) for defense and arms sales to other allies in the region, supporting the Iron Dome and modernizing its capabilities when needed, and furthering our nations' joint military exercises and readiness.

I also support the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a clear signal of the enduring relationship between the United States and the Israeli people. The MOU serves as a critical security commitment that helps maintain the strength and security of Israel, and is vital to our interests and stability in the region. Indeed, in 2020 the U.S. government provided \$3.8 billion in aid to Israel as part of the MOU, a level of funding essential to helping maintain its security. I am committed to ensuring that Israel continues to have robust U.S. support to maintain military and intelligence capacities, which benefits both of our countries. As with any funding assistance provided by our country, accountability and transparency are critical -- that's why I am pleased that the MOU also adheres to the Leahy Law, which ensures that American funds will not be used for a gross violation of human rights. For these reasons, I am committed to the full funding of the MOU without further conditions or restrictions.

### Roadmap for Peace

It is to the benefit of our country, Israel, the Palestinian people, the region, and the world to work toward a peaceful, two-state solution that ensures prosperity for all. **As Senator, I will be deeply committed to restoring serious dialogue to build a two-state solution that ensures the rights, religious freedom, and safety of Israelis and Palestinians.** A two-state solution benefits Israel's long-term security in the region, recognizes the Palestinian right to a sovereign state in their national homeland, and creates stability that can benefit long-term U.S. interests in the region. We must continue to work with earnest urgency toward peace.

I believe the U.S. should not tolerate bad actors or terrorists seeking Israel's destruction. We cannot achieve peace in the region without ensuring safety and religious freedoms for Israeli and Palestinian families. Tactics which involve violence and terrorism toward Israelis are morally unacceptable and make peace less attainable. **It is incumbent on U.S. leaders to speak out**



**against the dangerous rhetoric and the continued embrace of terrorism on the part of Hamas and some Palestinian leaders, and as Senator I always will.**

Instead we must engage Palestinian leaders who are seeking an equitable and peaceful permanent solution. I believe the U.S. should serve as a partner for Palestinians seeking religious and economic opportunities through peace. I was pleased to see President Biden restore humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people. We must ensure access to electricity and clean water and provide funding to U.N. agencies that serve Palestinians. **Just as it is incumbent to speak out against dangerous rhetoric and terrorism, it is incumbent on U.S. leaders to put a spotlight on Palestinian partners genuinely seeking peace, and as Senator I always will.**

**My peace and conflict resolution background teaches me to seek de-escalation during all negotiations.** Put more simply: escalations anywhere threaten peace prospects everywhere. That's why I must express my deep concerns about creeping Israeli settlement expansion and unilateral annexation in the West Bank as well as demolitions and forced relocations of Palestinian homes and civilian infrastructure. Friends tell friends the truth. As a friend of Israel's who believes its right to long-term security is unimpeachable and best achieved through peace, I will not shy away from sharing my views that I believe these actions escalate tensions and create conditions that lead to violence, not stability.

### Nuclear Iran

**Iran's nuclear weapons capability poses a threat to the United States, Israel, and our other allies, which is why I support the principles of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).** Whether you agree or disagree with the JCPOA, the Trump administration's decision to exit the deal was wrong and got us nothing in return. I believe we should enact a clean re-entry into the deal as a starting point on follow-up negotiations to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The decision to withdraw from the agreement has left the U.S. without visibility into Iran or international inspection authority.



The U.S. should investigate other mechanisms to hold Iran accountable for its ballistic missile program and illegal support for terrorist groups around the region, including the option of sanctions. We must also hold Hezbollah accountable. I denounce Iran's ties to Hezbollah, including its efforts supporting the flow of money and arms to Hezbollah. We must continue to make clear that Congressional authorization to engage in military operations against Iran does not exist, through measures including support of the House- and Senate-passed War Powers Resolution of 2020.

### Conclusion

Today, and as U.S. Senator, I support Israel and the Jewish people. I am committed to a strong, secure, and democratic Israel, which is vital to the United States interests. I believe in the right of Palestinians to live with dignity and security in a viable state of their own, and I will work to achieve a negotiated two-state solution, to serve all of our interests.

JEWISH INSIDER