

THE WEEKLY PRINT

The quarterback scion in Zion; Ritchie Torres to pick up Riverdale in latest redistricting; In Texas 35, Greg Casar outlines his approach on Israel and the Palestinians; With a target on her back, Carolyn Maloney gets lift from new map; In floor speech, Menendez blasts Biden administration's Vienna negotiations; On a range of Washington issues, the UAE and Israel are increasingly in the same boat; and A Jew on 'The View'? Some say it's long overdue.

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The quarterback scion in Zion

'The opportunity to come to a place like Israel, given everything that's going on here, was super enticing,' Nicky Montana tells The Circuit about moving to Israel.

By Ruth Marks Eglash

This story was first published on The Circuit.

To most Israelis, Nicky Montana appears to be just another ambitious American entrepreneur and investor curious about the startup nation's vibrant innovation scene and what it might contribute to our world in the future. For Americans and NFL-knowledgeable Israelis, however, he is sports royalty, as the son of iconic Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana.

The younger Montana moved to Israel three months ago and takes all such labels — and his father's legendary status — in his stride, remaining singularly focused on learning as much as he can about what makes Israel's high-tech sector tick, adding knowledge to his already successful foray into the industry.

"There's so much interesting stuff that has brought my attention here," Montana, 29, told *The Circuit* in an interview at a Tel Aviv cafe last week. "I was here in the past — on a trip with [New England Patriots owner and sponsor of the Israel Football League] Robert Kraft — and that was very different.

We went to Jerusalem, and we toured around, the schedule was very regimented. Now I am living here and meeting real people and just kind of getting ingrained in everything, and it's really been incredible."

Born and raised in California, where his father won four Super Bowl championships with the San Francisco 49ers, Montana said his father tried to downplay his fame and "never really talked about any of it really."

He said he only learned the true extent of his father's celebrity status more recently from the new six-part documentary series, "Joe Montana: Cool Under Pressure," produced by Peacock.

"It was all external and you know, sometimes people would be like, 'Do you really understand?'" Montana recalled. "I mean, obviously out on the field he was incredible, but then I would hear people talking about after the game that he went to hang out with Frank Sinatra and I'm like, 'I got to hear everything about that. Who was there? What were you guys doing? And I wonder what else was going on under the hood.'"

Montana, who said as a baby he initially called his father 'Hey Joe,' mimicking the fans who would scream out to the legendary

quarterback, also said that growing up, he and his older brother, Nate, were not pressured to pursue the game professionally. (Montana also has two older sisters.)

"It was never like, 'You have to play or we're going out to the yard now for drills,' he would never bring it up, really," said Montana. "I would have to beg him to help with practices, but he was super sensitive because of the pressure that might be put on us from a young age."

In the end, both brothers went on to play college football. Nicky, as quarterback like his father, first played for the University of Washington from 2009 to 2012, and later for Mt. San Antonio College. After one season with the junior college, he transferred in 2013 to Tulane, where he was the starting quarterback.

Montana said that like any teenager, he had to learn to appreciate his father's "status and his knowledge," but he quickly realized that he had a valuable resource if he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps. "It is hard to take direction from your parents, you know, I think a lot of people struggle with it and it took me a few years to realize like, wow, he's, you know, the best ever and if I don't listen to him, then the joke's on me."

Eventually, however, he decided not to pursue a career in professional football. “It was always my dream, but towards the end, I kept getting hurt and taken out of the game,” Montana explained. “At a certain point, towards the end, I was just like, I’ve been doing this my whole life and I don’t know what it is, but the feeling is gone.”

Putting his football career behind him, Nicky took the skills of leadership and endurance that he learned on the field and turned his attention to the world of high-tech. He began by dabbling in fantasy sports, and eventually sold his own startup, a Y Combinator-backed company called Balto, to FuboTV, the leading sports-first live TV streaming platform in the U.S., in December 2020.

Montana then began investing as an angel investor in more than half a dozen companies across the globe. Last year, when Isaac “Yitz” Applbaum, co-founder and partner of Tel Aviv-based MizMaa Ventures, and a close friend of the Montana family (as well as a wine columnist at *Jewish Insider*),

asked if he wanted to move to Tel Aviv and work for MizMaa, Montana hesitated only slightly.

His friends, he said, thought he was crazy. “All they knew about Israel was camels and rockets,” he quipped. “But the opportunity to come to a place like Israel, given everything that’s going on here, was super enticing – everyone is an entrepreneur here.”

Montana, whose focus at MizMaa is on Web3, cryptocurrencies and fintech, continued, “There’s so much ambition and it’s amazing being on the venture side and seeing how everyone thinks the world’s gonna look in the future.”

“The other thing, I guess, is the adventure coming over here because I’ve lived in California my whole life,” he continued. “I was curious because I grew up in Silicon Valley and a bunch of my friends are either entrepreneurs or work for the top firms there, and I wanted to know what is the difference, what’s going on here that’s not going on in San Francisco or Silicon Valley?”

While Montana has been getting a glimpse into the future as envisaged by the best minds in Israeli startups, he is also enjoying the here and now of life in Tel Aviv, as well as the idiosyncrasies of Israeli culture.

“I think the whole Israeli thing called *chutzpah* — I’m probably butchering it — is very motivating,” he grinned. “It is incredible to see it in real life, but Israel’s success is partly because of Israelis not being afraid to fail; they just keep on going until they succeed.”

Asked if anyone in Israel has associated him with his famous father or if he’d been approached about playing for the Israel Football League, Montana laughed. “The head coach DM’d me before I got over here with a really funny message: ‘Words reach me that you’re coming to the region, do you want to come and try out?’” he said.

As for Israelis recognizing the legendary Joe Montana, his son laughed: “I don’t know why they would — they might confuse him with Daniel Craig, though.” ♦

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

Ritchie Torres to pick up Riverdale in latest redistricting

Residents of the heavily Jewish Bronx neighborhood are energized that the freshman congressman and pro-Israel stalwart could soon represent them

By Matthew Kassel

New York State Democrats revealed a new proposed redistricting plan on Sunday that showed the 15th Congressional District, currently represented by first-term Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), is set to expand northward to include the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Riverdale.

“I am looking forward to representing a congressional district that serves as a bridge between iconic neighborhoods: the South Bronx and Riverdale,” Torres told *Jewish Insider* on Monday. “Combating antisemitism and advocating for an abiding American-Israeli relationship have

long been passions of mine. To have the opportunity to represent Riverdale, in light of those passions, feels like a marriage made in heaven.”

The new lines came as a surprise, if also a welcome one, to Jewish residents of Riverdale. Stu Loeser, a veteran political strategist who lives in the area, said “nobody expected” that Torres would pick up the affluent Bronx enclave that has long been home to a sizable population of Orthodox Jews who “vote Democratic up and down the ballot.” Torres currently represents a district that is among the poorest and most geographically condensed in the country.

The redesigned House map, which has

been accused of partisan gerrymandering because it is highly favorable for Democrats across New York, could be approved by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul as early as Wednesday. The redistricting process had initially fallen to a bipartisan commission established in 2014, but when the panel failed to arrive at a consensus, Democratic lawmakers, who hold majorities in both chambers, set forth their own boundaries.

Despite the somewhat awkward outline of Torres’s new district, which connects to the North Bronx by way of a jaggedly shaped ribbon of land that shoots up from his current territory, Jewish residents

of Riverdale suggested that the pairing made sense. Torres, a former New York City councilman who has built a sizable Jewish support base that extends beyond the largely Hispanic 15th District, is no stranger to Riverdale, where he has built strong connections with Jewish community members in the area thanks in large part to his vocal support for Israel.

Such enthusiasm was on display on a recent Saturday in November, when Torres, 33, filled the Modern Orthodox Riverdale Jewish Center, the largest synagogue in the town, for a local AIPAC event.

Jeffrey Dinowitz, a New York State assemblyman whose district includes Riverdale, said he was “thrilled” that Torres, who is one of the first openly gay Black men in Congress and who has described himself as “the embodiment of a pro-Israel progressive,” seems likely to represent the neighborhood.

“He has an incredible record,” Dinowitz told JI. “He’s a progressive, but he’s a progressive who is a staunch ally. I know, based on his statements and actions, that people who care about Israel are going to have someone who takes Israel’s interests to heart.”

Though the map has yet to be finalized, supporters of Torres were anyway coordinating a fundraiser in Riverdale on Feb. 17 ahead of Torres’s first planned trip to Israel as a congressman.

“People are excited,” Harry Feder, a former president of the Riverdale Jewish Center who lives in the district and is helping to organize the fundraiser, told JI. “Everyone is breathing a sigh of relief.”

The warm reception stands in contrast with the relatively lukewarm manner in which many Jewish community leaders in Riverdale have accepted their current congressman, Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY). With backing from Justice Democrats, the freshman lawmaker, 45, assumed office last year after unseating former longtime Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), a prominent pro-Israel stalwart who had chaired the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Throughout his first year in Congress, Bowman has at times found himself at odds with Riverdale’s Jewish community over his approach to the Middle East. Last April, for instance, Bowman was on the receiving end

of a highly critical online petition organized by local Jewish leaders who condemned the congressman for co-sponsoring legislation that would place restrictions on U.S. military assistance for Israel.

Rabbi Avi Weiss, the founding rabbi of the Modern Orthodox Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, was among the authors of the petition and has consistently expressed strong reservations over Bowman’s approach to Israel since even before he was elected. He said he was “delighted” by the possibility that Torres would pick up Riverdale as a result of redistricting. “Torres,” he told JI in a recent email, “is the real deal: a leader who believes in the inestimable value of all people while passionately and unequivocally supporting the State of Israel.”

Former Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT), who lives in Riverdale, said he was similarly pleased by the news that Torres is poised to become his new congressman. “He is a principled, independent-minded Democrat who will be an excellent representative of the diverse population that lives in our neighborhood,” Lieberman told JI. “It will be good to have a congressman who is a liberal Democrat who strongly supports Israel.”

For his part, Engel, who is also a resident of Riverdale, said he has spoken with Torres “several times” since he was elected and would be “ecstatic” if the freshman lawmaker were to represent him in the House. “I think, intrinsically, he has a good, warm feeling toward the U.S.-Israel relationship, and that’s just not something that we have seen recently,” he said in an interview with JI.

Engel, who has refrained from commenting publicly on Bowman’s record, declined to address his former challenger’s positions on Israel.

Even as Jewish leaders in Riverdale said that Torres was a natural fit for the traditionally liberal redoubt, however, local pro-Israel activists who have disagreed with Bowman’s foreign policy views emphasized that they have valued his continued engagement on Israel issues.

“Certainly there was some tension along the way, and there are obviously lots of people who are concerned,” Binyamin Krauss, a rabbi who serves as the principal of SAR Academy, a Modern Orthodox day school in Riverdale, told JI.

Still, he said his exchanges with Bowman

have always been “based in mutual respect,” and he commended the congressman for in some ways having differentiated himself from other Israel critics in the House during his tenure.

In recent months, Bowman has walked a somewhat precarious path on Israel as he balances relationships with Jewish constituents along with his traditional allies on the left. Last September, for instance, Jewish leaders said they appreciated when Bowman broke with his fellow Squad members as he voted in favor of \$1 billion in supplemental funding for Israel’s Iron Dome missile-defense system.

But the congressman had also found himself at odds with the Democratic Socialists of America, whose Madison, Wis., chapter called for his immediate expulsion after the vote. Later that fall, Bowman faced further scrutiny following his first trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories on a congressional delegation hosted by the left-leaning Israel advocacy group J Street.

The DSA, which endorsed Bowman in 2020, supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel. In December, the DSA’s national political committee said it had decided against revoking Bowman’s membership but condemned his Iron Dome vote as “egregious” while also criticizing the J Street trip, during which he and a group of House Democrats met with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

In witnessing such blowback, Krauss told JI he recognized that Bowman had put himself in somewhat risky political territory. He said he had spoken with Bowman “at length” about his trip to Israel, and was encouraged that the congressman had expressed interest in visiting again.

But not everyone has been so understanding. “He has been a disaster for Israel,” said Feder. “Yes, he has had some engagement, but it really hasn’t shown itself in votes or support.”

A spokesperson for Bowman’s office declined to comment on the record when reached by JI on Monday. If the updated House lines are approved, Bowman’s district would stretch north to take in new territory in Putnam County.

Torres, who is largely in alignment with Bowman on such progressive policy

initiatives as public housing, the Green New Deal and Medicare for All, has for his part faced some vocal criticism from the far left for his pro-Israel views.

Torres has dismissed accusations that “you cannot be both progressive and pro-Israel” as “a vicious lie.”

Before his election to the House, Torres had visited Israel twice on delegations hosted by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. He has credited those experiences, which took place during his time as a city councilman between 2014 and 2020, with shaping his views on the Jewish state.

During an introductory Zoom call at the beginning of the pandemic, Krauss said he spoke with Torres about how the trips had impacted his approach to Israel as a congressman. The rabbi said he admired that Torres had already given serious consideration to America’s longstanding relationship with Israel, which he has vehemently defended in the House amid increasingly vocal divisions over Middle East foreign policy issues within the Democratic Party.

“Whoever our member of Congress is,” Krauss said, “I think it’s important for them to be aware of that.”

“Ritchie knows the issues,” Engel

emphasized in conversation with JI on Monday. “He understands Israel being the only democracy in the Middle East. He understands that Israel is under threat every day from terrorists. He knows it, he understands it, and he feels it.”

When Feder first met Torres at the AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., three years ago, he said he was immediately impressed with the level of interest the New York lawmaker had demonstrated on issues pertaining to the Middle East, even before his election to the House.

That dedication seems to have grown considerably since he assumed a foreign policy portfolio as a federal official. Last November, for instance, Feder recalled meeting with Torres on Capitol Hill just as Idan Roll, Israel’s deputy foreign minister, was leaving the congressman’s office. “You could see that they were developing a strong relationship,” Feder said.

“He has really taken the time to build relationships and learn about Israel and antisemitism,” Eric Dinowitz, a New York City councilman whose district covers Riverdale as well as some surrounding neighborhoods that are also represented by his father, Jeffrey, said of Torres. “With that knowledge, he has been a source of passion and reason when it comes to policies that

affect both Israel and the Jewish people.”

Loeser, the Democratic strategist in Riverdale, echoed that sentiment, praising what he described as the congressman’s “broader fights against antisemitism” in addition to his vocal support for Israel. “He feels in his bones it’s the right thing to do,” said Loeser, who has known Torres since his City Council days, “even if, up to now, he never had many Jewish constituents.”

Michael Davis, a Jewish community leader in Riverdale and the founding partner of The Plymouth Group, a New York City-based real estate investment firm, said he was confident that Torres would meet the needs of Riverdale’s “diverse” voter base. “Ritchie consistently puts principles over politics,” he told JI, “and our community feels blessed to have him as our partner and advocate in the halls of power and leadership.”

“He’s delighted to have Riverdale, and Riverdale is delighted to have him,” Engel said of Torres. The former congressman, who was unseated during his 16th term in the House, suggested he would not be surprised if Torres ultimately served longer than he did. “I always joke that he’s going to beat me one day.” ♦

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

In Texas 35, Greg Casar outlines his approach on Israel and the Palestinians

The three-term Austin City Council member, a member of the Democratic Socialists for America, appears to be charting his own path on the Middle East

By Gabby Deutch and Marc Rod

In the competitive March 1 primary for an Austin-area congressional seat, Austin City Councilmember Greg Casar has racked up an impressive slate of progressive endorsements.

National figures such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) have pledged their support for Casar, as has Justice Democrats, a progressive political action committee

known for backing insurgent candidates. Casar, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) who was first elected to the council in 2014, is running to the left of primary challenger Eddie Rodriguez, a Democratic state representative. Early voting for the race in Texas’s 35th Congressional District begins on Feb. 14.

But Casar, 32, appears to be charting his own path on Israel, according to a letter

he wrote to a local rabbi that was obtained by *Jewish Insider* on Tuesday. In the letter, Casar pledged to support American military assistance to Israel, stated his opposition to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and expressed a desire to travel to Israel and the West Bank.

DSA opposes all U.S. military aid to Israel, supports BDS and asks candidates to commit to not visiting the Jewish state.

The national DSA organization has not yet made an endorsement in the race, while DSA's local Austin chapter is supporting Casar. A spokesperson for Casar declined to comment and he does not appear to have publicly commented on Israel or the Palestinians in the past.

Describing his foreign policy ideology as rooted in "justice and democracy," Casar wrote to Rabbi Alan Freedman, a rabbi at the Temple Beth Shalom Reform congregation in Austin, "I believe in the right of Israelis to live in their own democratic state. I also believe in the right of Israelis to live in peace."

Casar pledged to "support the continued federal aid for self defense of Israel," including "the systems necessary for defense against rocket attacks that could harm civilians." In September, Congress voted 420-9 to approve \$1 billion in supplemental funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile-defense system. Eight Democrats voted against the bill.

"I also believe in the right of the Palestinian people to live in peace, security, and democracy. These are fundamental rights," Casar stated in the letter. "The clearest path" to "safety and sovereignty for all," he wrote, "is a two state solution that will win the peace."

"A human rights approach to foreign policy" is at the crux of Casar's worldview, as stated in the letter. "The humanitarian crisis in Gaza and indefinite occupation in the West Bank are untenable for Israelis, Palestinians, and our collective consciousness."

Citing his Catholic faith, Casar argued that discussions of "Palestinian suffering" require "deep acknowledgment of poverty and injustice. It requires a reckoning with the displacement of families and lives lost to war across the region." He did not take a position on a demand voiced by many Palestinians to allow the descendants of people who fled present-day Israel before the 1948 partition to return.

In noting the "historical trauma of two peoples," Casar wrote that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is "hard to talk about." But, he wrote, advocates and observers must be able to speak freely on the topic. "I support everyone's right to freedom of speech," said Casar.

"When one raises valid concerns around Palestinian rights, there is too often the

threat that one could be unfairly charged with anti-Semitism," wrote Casar. "And advocacy for the safety of Jewish people in Israel does not mean being callous to the plight of Palestinians."

Freedman declined to discuss specifics of Casar's Israel policy, deferring to the campaign.

In an interview with JI last week, prior to JI obtaining Casar's letter, Freedman told JI that Casar "firmly, completely supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state" and believes the councilman is "anxious to understand the situation better." Freedman said the two had previously spoken at length about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"One of the things I took great comfort in, that I found fairly remarkable, is that he wants to go to Israel and in a way that fully is able to explore the situation," he said.

Freedman added that Casar's "general approach" has to do "with the quality of life of everyone in the region."

"He has concerns for the welfare of all those who live in that area," Freedman explained.

Casar noted that he and Freedman spoke about the "threats of nuclear proliferation," and he praised American efforts to reenter the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that President Donald Trump pulled out of in 2018.

"I support the continued efforts of the Biden Administration to reach a constructive and verifiable agreement with the Iranian government to ensure that Iran cannot ever acquire a nuclear weapon," wrote Casar. "It's also important for such an agreement to address the Iranian government's dangerous expansionist policies and its support for violent and extremist groups."

Casar's letter to Freedman — dated Jan. 9, prior to the hostage crisis at a Colleyville, Texas, synagogue on Jan. 15 — referred to a longstanding relationship with the rabbi and joint efforts to combat hate and antisemitism.

"At home, I will remain a persistent voice against bigotry and anti-Semitism," wrote Casar, adding that should he be elected to Congress, "I pledge to take these values and put them into action in federal policy."

Freedman described Casar as a longtime friend of the Jewish community, particularly amid a recent series of antisemitic incidents in the Austin area, including participating

in a rally organized by the Anti-Defamation League and local Jewish federation.

"He's been front and center and expressing his concerns and support for the Jewish community," Freedman said.

Casar also attended a service at a different Austin-area synagogue following the Colleyville attack, staying to discuss Israel and other Jewish issues with congregants following the service.

No independent polling has been conducted for this race, but two polls conducted by Casar's campaign show him leading Rodriguez by more than 20 points. Rodriguez said his campaign's polls show a much closer race, but the campaign declined to make their findings public.

Casar led Rodriguez significantly in fundraising at the end of 2021, having brought in \$468,000 to Rodriguez's \$251,000. Casar also has more cash left to burn, with \$356,000 on hand at the close of the last quarter, compared to Rodriguez's \$220,000.

The newly redrawn 35th Congressional District runs from the heavily Latino East Austin to San Antonio. It was previously represented by longtime Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), who is now running in the 37th District.

In his letter to Freedman, Casar described their relationship as a "partnership," and said the pair have together "advocated for economic and racial justice." Casar, whose parents are Mexican immigrants, wrote, "Jewish leaders are among the first to answer calls for change and justice for communities of color, for immigrant families, and for the disadvantaged."

In that "spirit of solidarity," Casar said he wrote the letter to reflect "my continued learning and dialogue on issues specific to Jewish safety at home and across the world." ♦

With a target on her back, Carolyn Maloney gets lift from new map

The 15-term congresswoman is facing several challengers in the newly drawn 12th District

By Matthew Kassel

Forced into a perennially defensive crouch in three consecutive primary cycles since 2018, Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), the veteran New York City lawmaker who chairs the powerful House Oversight Committee, has found herself among the most high-profile targets of the insurgent left.

Despite her long tenure in the House, Maloney has shown some signs of weakness, which progressives have been particularly eager to exploit after the surprising results of last cycle, when a former Obama staffer, Suraj Patel, came within just four points of claiming victory in the hotly contested multi-candidate primary battle for New York's 12th Congressional District.

Until recently, it seemed that another candidate was relatively well-poised to overcome that narrow margin as Maloney seeks to extend her 15-term tenure in the June 28 primary. Rana Abdelhamid, a 28-year-old Google employee and progressive activist in Queens, launched her campaign to much fanfare last April, buoyed by a high-profile endorsement from the left-wing political group Justice Democrats, which has helped orchestrate several upset victories over long-standing House incumbents, with a proven track record in New York.

But even as Abdelhamid has claimed that voters are "ready for a new generation of leadership," it now looks as if Maloney, who turns 76 later this month, has secured an advantage that is almost certain to give a boost to her reelection bid.

On Wednesday, the New York State legislature approved an updated House map that would expand Maloney's district westward into Manhattan, where she is likely to pick up a cluster of new voters that will add to a traditional support base in her home neighborhood of the Upper

East Side. Meanwhile, the new boundaries cut back on left-leaning enclaves in Brooklyn and Queens, where Maloney has performed poorly in recent elections. The congresswoman had reportedly proposed that the new map jettison voters in those neighborhoods, including Williamsburg and Astoria.

The map, which was designed by lawmakers in Albany, is highly favorable for Democrats across the state, and Maloney is no exception, according to Democratic strategists and other elections experts in New York. "The old lines were much less appealing," said George Arzt, a political consultant who has worked for Maloney in previous elections but is not involved with her current campaign. The new district, he added, represents "the core of" Maloney's "constituency." Eli Valentin, a columnist who specializes in local politics, agreed. The boundaries, he said, will provide "some protection" against what he described as a "credible primary challenge" from the party's progressive flank. "Her Christmas gift may have come early."

Sophia Brown, a spokesperson for Maloney's campaign, was even-handed in her assessment of the redistricting plan, which was unveiled on Sunday and is expected to be signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul as soon as this week. "We respect what the state legislature has put forward, and await the final verification on the lines," she said in an emailed statement to *Jewish Insider* on Tuesday evening. The congresswoman "works hard to represent all parts of her district, and looks forward to running a strong campaign focused on her progressive record and rooted in the communities she is proud to represent."

Abdelhamid, for her part, said she had expected the district would be redrawn

for some time and, with five months until the primary, remained undaunted by the results. "We have planned for this," she said in a statement on Monday, "and we are still on track to win."

In an interview with JI last week before the map was revealed, Maloney emphasized that she was taking the race seriously no matter what the outcome of the redistricting process, which had initially fallen to a bipartisan commission established in 2014 but was ultimately completed by Democratic legislators, who hold majorities in both chambers, when the panel failed to arrive at a consensus. The map could see court challenges from Republicans, who have made allegations of partisan gerrymandering.

"I'm working very hard, both in my job in Washington and also in my reelection," Maloney told JI in a phone conversation. "I am deeply engaged in all of the communities and have delivered significant results across my district from Brooklyn and Queens to Manhattan," she said, reiterating a "progressive record" that has included "important infrastructure battles" such as the expansion of the Second Avenue subway line. "I'm just continuing to work hard, and that's it."

While Abdelhamid is viewed as the most formidable challenger to have entered the race, Maloney is also facing two other primary opponents, including local community activists Maya Contreras and Jesse Cerrotti. Patel, who had also challenged Maloney in 2018, losing by a significantly wider margin than he did the following cycle, said last spring that he intended to run again. He has yet to enter the race, but an online poll distributed last week asking respondents about how they voted in the 2020 primary, which a source familiar

with the survey said was commissioned by Patel, indicates that he is still considering another bid. Patel declined to comment on the record when reached by JI this week.

Despite Abdelhamid characterizing Maloney as out of touch with the district, the two opponents are aligned on such marquee progressive agenda items as the Green New Deal and Medicare for All. They part ways, however, on foreign policy issues concerning the Middle East.

Abdelhamid, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, is skeptical of America's longstanding relationship with Israel, and supports conditioning U.S. military aid that is guaranteed in a 10-year memorandum of understanding between the two countries. Maloney, on the other hand, is opposed to such measures. Last April, she was among 330 House members who signed on to a bipartisan letter, led by Reps. Ted Deutch (D-FL) and Michael McCaul (R-TX), expressing support for continued security assistance to Israel.

During last May's conflict between Israel and Hamas, Abdelhamid was critical of Maloney's public statements on the escalating violence in the region, including an affirmation of Israel's "right to defend itself" that the congresswoman had posted to social media. "Unlike Representative Maloney," Abdelhamid shot back on Twitter, "I don't believe that Israel — or any country — should receive a blank check funded by American taxpayers to use in a way that violates our values and basic human rights."

Such disagreements have been relatively common in recent primary races where far-left challengers have taken on establishment Democrats who hold a more favorable view of Israel. But in the matchup between Abdelhamid and Maloney, a somewhat rarer contrast has emerged over differing approaches to the Iran nuclear deal. While Abdelhamid supports reentering the agreement, a view that is widely shared among Democrats, Maloney publicly opposed the deal when it was brokered by the Obama administration in 2015. At the time, Maloney had expressed concern that "even if Iran complies with the restraints spelled out throughout the life of the agreement," she wrote in a statement, "the deal does not block Iran from eventually acquiring nuclear weapons."

Speaking with JI, Maloney acknowledged that she had objected to the agreement but had nevertheless committed to upholding the terms of the accord when it was finalized. "I supported the agreement because that was the only thing we had," she explained. Maloney said she would "continue to trust" the Biden administration as it engages in renewed negotiations with Iran after former President Donald Trump abandoned the deal in 2018, but clarified that she "will remain vigilant and speak up against any agreement that instead speeds Iran's path toward a nuclear weapon."

"I still do not trust the regime in Tehran to negotiate in good faith," Maloney said incredulously. "In fact, if you remember, right after we had the agreement in 2015, they had a celebration. I'll never forget it. They had signs saying 'Death to Israel,' 'Death to America.' So I don't trust the regime to negotiate in good faith, especially while they're still breaking the enrichment and monitoring provisions. They haven't lived up to their side of the deal."

Maloney has long been regarded as a staunch pro-Israel advocate thanks in part to her criticism of the Iran deal, which was broadly opposed by the organized Jewish community, as well her views on a range of other Middle East foreign policy matters.

Though foreign policy is unlikely to emerge as a major issue in the race, differences over Israel could play a role in motivating how some voters cast their ballots this summer, according to Jake Dilemani, a managing director in the New York office of Mercury Public Affairs, who consulted on Maloney's 2018 campaign but is uninvolved in the current primary.

"There is a segment of the electorate for whom it will be a or the top issue," said Dilemani, who lives in Maloney's district, where he is a Democratic Party leader. "In this district, there's probably more pro-Israel voters, particularly with Brooklyn and Queens slimmed down," he added. "That could be enough to determine the outcome."

The heavily Democratic 12th District, as it now stands, is home to a sizable Jewish population of approximately 115,000, according to a survey conducted in 2014 by the Berman Jewish DataBank, a project of The Jewish Federations of North America.

"I feel very fortunate and proud to

have the opportunity to represent such a diverse district as the 12th District, and it includes a very vibrant and active Jewish population," Maloney said. "There are many organizations that are headquartered in the district that I am privileged to represent that are active not only in the religious community but in the civic life of our city."

"She's been a fantastic leader for the Jewish community," said Rami Sigal, a Jewish community activist in his late teens who lives on the Upper East Side and is supporting Maloney in the primary.

On Monday, Democratic Majority for Israel's political arm included Maloney in its first round of congressional endorsements in the midterms. The congresswoman "has been a stalwart supporter of the U.S.-Israel relationship and a champion for advancing the Democratic agenda," Rachel Rosen, a spokesperson for DMFI PAC, told JI. "She's facing an opponent who has made her anti-Israel views a central part of her campaign."

Maloney was also among the first candidates endorsed by the bipartisan advocacy group Pro-Israel America this cycle. In a statement at the time of the announcement last May, shortly after Abdelhamid had entered the race, Jonathan Missner, PIA's chairman, commended Maloney's support for "foreign security aid to Israel" while adding his appreciation for her continued efforts "at the forefront of combating antisemitism in New York City and around the world."

"Given the fact that she is not Jewish herself, I think she is an example for other legislators," said Janice Weinman, the former CEO of Hadassah, who worked with Maloney to pass a Holocaust education bill that authorized \$10 million over five years to bolster resources at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. "There are really no words I can say that would do justice to her commitment, her perseverance, her energy to getting this bill passed," Weinman said of the Never Again Education Act, which was signed into law in 2020. "She was always present on this matter."

As a former teacher, "I see the answers to many issues as education," Maloney said. "I would say that young people are not taught to hate. They don't have hate in their hearts or 'anti' thoughts about anything. It's taught

to them.”

The congresswoman expressed alarm, particularly amid rising incidents of antisemitism in New York and across the country, over some polls showing that younger generations are unaware of or misinformed about even the most basic facts regarding the Holocaust. “It shows how fragile democracy can be,” she said, “and how you have to really fight any form of hatred.”

Amanda Berman, the founder and executive director of Zioness, said Maloney was the first member of Congress to stand with the group a week after it had launched, in January 2019, at a “teach-in” confronting allegations of antisemitism within the Women’s March.

“She has been resolute and consistent in that fight, even marching with us at the Women’s March two days later,” said Berman, who clarified that, because of the group’s nonprofit status, she is forbidden from endorsing or opposing candidates for public office. “She’s been unequivocal that

antisemitism — including anti-Zionism — is intolerable, and that it is ultimately both harmful to the Jewish community and destructive to the feminist and progressive movements.”

Even without the favorable new House map, Maloney would likely have been well situated for the primary. Her campaign has received support from progressive groups, including an endorsement from the political arm of the House Progressive Caucus, as well as influential state legislators like Alessandra Biaggi and Dan Quart. In addition, Maloney has pulled in more than \$1.8 million since last January, and she entered the new year with more than \$1 million in the bank.

“I’m proud of my people-powered, grassroots campaign,” Maloney said, “which is rooted in our communities and neighborhoods.”

Abdelhamid has raised just under \$800,000, with \$380,000 in cash on hand as of late December. She has also notched endorsements from influential progressive leaders in the city, including the actor

Cynthia Nixon, City Comptroller Brad Lander and City Councilmember Tiffany Cabán.

But while most political experts said that Maloney seems to have an edge in the primary, Hank Sheinkopf, a veteran Democratic strategist in New York, was somewhat less certain of her prospects. The new lines “should be sufficient to protect her this time,” he said. “But anything can happen.”

Either way, he predicted that Maloney will “continue to be a target” in future elections as progressive insurgents in New York City seek to build on previous upsets. “Every year it’s going to be tougher for her to win because there are going to be more people looking to get rid of her,” Sheinkopf told JI. “They’re going to keep running.”

Maloney, for her part, suggested that she would do the same. “I’ve never lost an election in my entire life, even in high school,” she said. “I don’t intend to start now.” ♦

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

In floor speech, Menendez blasts Biden administration’s Vienna negotiations

The Democratic senator expressed disappointment with the Biden administration, questioning ‘what exactly are we trying to salvage?’

By Marc Rod

Speaking for nearly an hour on the Senate floor on Tuesday evening, Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) warned that Iran is dangerously close to acquiring a nuclear weapon and argued that current talks to re-enter the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are ineffectual and insufficient.

Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has long been a critic of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and argued early in President Joe Biden’s term in favor of pursuing a further-reaching deal instead of re-entering the original 2015 agreement.

The senator referred to “Iran’s

dangerously and rapidly escalating nuclear program that has put it on the brink of having enough material for a nuclear weapon,” pointing to estimates that Iran is three to four weeks from amassing enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon, and four months away from having enough material for a second bomb.

Menendez questioned the utility of reentering the JCPOA given that some of the sunset provisions involved in the original agreement are set to expire next year and the arms embargo on Iran has already expired.

“At this point, we seriously have to ask ‘what exactly are we trying to salvage?’” he said, adding that some of the JCPOA’s

proponents “are holding on... for nostalgia’s sake.”

Administration officials have said for months that indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran in Vienna are nearing a critical end stage, and *The New York Times* reported on Monday that the parties “appear on the cusp of restoring the deal.”

The New Jersey senator argued that many of his concerns about the original deal have come to pass, with Iran preserving most of its nuclear infrastructure, blocking international inspections of its nuclear program and continuing to advance other malign activities in the Middle East.

“I ask why we would try to simply go

back to the JCPOA — a deal that was not sufficient in the first place — and still doesn't address some of the most serious national security concerns we have?" he said.

Menendez said he was initially "cautiously optimistic" about the Biden administration's negotiations with Iran, particularly its repeated pledges to pursue a "longer and stronger" agreement, but made the case that the administration has not followed through.

"A year later, I have yet to hear any parameters of 'longer' or 'stronger' terms or whether that is even a feasible prospect," he said. "And even when it seemed a constructive agreement might be possible last summer, upon taking office, the Raisi government abandoned all previous understandings and, as I mentioned, made absolutely clear that Iran's ballistic missiles and regional proxy networks are 'not negotiable.'"

The top foreign policy Democrat recommended a number of potential steps forward, including stronger enforcement of existing sanctions, sanctioning Chinese entities engaged in oil trade with Iran, pressuring other JCPOA members to impose snapback sanctions and a significantly more stringent future deal, with bipartisan support. ♦

FEBRUARY 4, 2022

On a range of Washington issues, the UAE and Israel are increasingly in the same boat

The response to a series of drone and missile attacks from the Iran-backed Houthis spotlight the cooperation Emirati and Israeli representatives have been building for years in Washington

By Gabby Deutch

Following a series of Houthi drone attacks against civilian targets in the United Arab Emirates in recent weeks, the country's newest ally has pledged to come to its defense in the face of attacks from the Iranian proxy.

"We completely support your security requirements," Israeli President Isaac Herzog told Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in a Monday meeting during Herzog's first visit to the Gulf nation, according to comments released by Herzog's office. "We are here together to find ways and means to bring full security to people who seek peace in our region."

Israel's show of support for the Emiratis amid the Houthi attacks marks a shift that has occurred in Washington, too. While the signing of the Abraham Accords brought about a regional realignment, the normalization agreements also changed the calculus among the countries' representatives in Washington and the way they approach U.S. policymakers.

"There has been discussion in a way that never existed before. There are parallel interests and joint interests, so I've gotta believe — I know that there is consultation,"

said a D.C.-based foreign policy professional who is in frequent contact with both Israeli and Emirati diplomats, as well as American national security officials.

In the turbulent waters of the Middle East, Israel and the UAE increasingly find themselves in the same boat. But before the Houthi attacks, those boats were traveling at different speeds: Both countries face a shared threat from Iran, but the nature of that threat, and how each responds to it, is different. But the attacks on the UAE could change things.

Senior Emirati and Israeli leaders advocated this week for Washington to redesignate the Iran-backed Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, which would make it easier to sanction the rebels. Emirati Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef Al Otaiba and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, the UAE's ambassador to the United Nations, called for the change in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed published on Monday seeking a tougher U.S. response to the attacks. Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid told *Axios* on Wednesday that Israel also supports the redesignation.

President Joe Biden removed the designation weeks into his presidency in the hopes that it would bring the Houthis to

the negotiating table and make it easier for humanitarian relief to enter Yemen.

After the first attack more than two weeks ago, which killed three civilian workers in Abu Dhabi, Biden said the possibility of adding the Houthis to the list of FTOs is "under consideration." On Wednesday, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said the Biden administration is considering possible actions. "I suspect we will be in a position to take additional action given the reprehensible attacks that we've seen emanate from Yemen from the Houthis in recent days and weeks," he told reporters.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), a co-chair of the Abraham Accords Caucus, said the Houthi attacks "are an attempt to jeopardize the progress made between Israel and UAE towards peace, and they warrant a swift response."

"Since being delisted [as a Foreign Terrorist Organization], the Houthis have rejected good-faith efforts towards diplomacy and targeted innocent civilians in the region," the Congresswoman told *Jewish Insider*. "President Biden should immediately reverse the dangerous decision to delist the Houthis as a terrorist organization."

Not everyone in Washington agrees that the FTO designation is the right move. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the strikes “a very dangerous turn of events,” given that the UAE had previously withdrawn from Yemen.

Reed added, “We just have to make more of an effort to try to stop the humanitarian crisis. And I think the designation [of the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization] is not as critical at the moment as taking positive actions to stop the violence.”

Reed also said that he could be supportive of sending defensive aid, such as an Iron Dome missile-defense battery, to the UAE should the UAE request it. “I think defensive weapons systems are important. Dubai International Airport is one of the most significant transportation centers in that area that could be threatened,” he told JI.

Israel and the UAE’s shared attitudes toward the Biden administration are due, in part, to the reality of Washington pulling back from the Middle East to focus on other threats, such as China and Russia.

“The single most important factor that’s driving the largest number of decisions in the region by the widest number of actors is — and has been for a number of years now — widespread perception of American withdrawal,” said William Wechsler, senior director of the Rafik Hariri Center and Middle East programs at the Atlantic Council.

During a public conversation on Thursday, CENTCOM Commander Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, who oversees U.S. military operations in the Middle East, agreed that American priorities have shifted to other parts of the globe. But he insisted that the U.S. will continue to come to the need of allies in the Middle East.

CENTCOM’s “force structure,” or military capability, has been reduced “because we face grave threats from China and from Russia,” said McKenzie. But he insisted that the U.S. will continue to assist the UAE and other regional allies in the face of attacks even as Washington’s focus has shifted.

“I think our role, and my role in particular, is to provide that assurance that the United States will be there for them, because I think when it’s all said and done, everybody wants

the United States to be there,” McKenzie said at Thursday’s virtual event hosted by the Middle East Institute. “We’re the preferred partner. And we’re always going to be the preferred partner.”

Earlier this week, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced plans to send fighter jets to the UAE in response to the attacks, and McKenzie is expected to travel to the country next week. At the same time, approximately 60 countries kicked off the largest joint naval exercise in the Middle East. Among the participating countries are the U.S., Israel, the UAE and Bahrain — as well as Saudi Arabia and Oman, which have not yet joined the Abraham Accords.

Iran sits just miles away from the UAE across the Persian Gulf, and unlike Israel, the UAE maintains a channel of communication with Iran.

“When you are a small country, and you are a neighbor of an aggressive and crazy country that doesn’t believe in international commitment, or international relations — they work with militias, they don’t work with states — you have to be cautious,” said Najat AlSaied, an assistant professor at American University in the Emirates and an academic advisor at Sharaka, an NGO founded to promote cultural ties between Israel and Gulf nations. But they now view each other as allies against a common threat, even if their goals do not exactly align.

“Before the drone and missile attacks on UAE started, you had a real potential spectrum between UAE and Israel on Iran, because the UAE can potentially have some kind of talks with Iran. Communication has been going on. They’re trading partners. And that’s obviously not the case for Israel in any way, shape or form,” said Victoria Coates, a former deputy national security advisor. “What’s interesting about the stepping up [of] the Houthi attacks over the last three weeks is, in a way, that it shuts that off for the UAE and pushes them closer to the Israeli position.”

The blossoming Emirati-Israeli relationship in Washington does not mean the two countries are in lockstep on all geopolitical issues, or even Iran. But they do find themselves consulting each other more frequently than ever before.

The missile attacks on civilians in the UAE have also given the Emiratis an

experience that Israeli civilians know all too well from their proximity to Hamas in Gaza.

“When people go through similar experiences of having non-state actors fire rockets on their cities, that’s bound to be a bonding experience of sorts,” said David Makovsky, director of the Koret Project on Arab-Israel Relations at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

The countries also had to contend with similar critics. Like Israel, the Emiratis responded to the Houthi attacks with military strikes of their own, by targeting missile launchers in Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen. And like Israelis, who have faced criticism for their retaliatory attacks in Gaza, the Emiratis have received criticism for not doing enough to avoid civilians in Yemen.

“It used to be that every leader in all of these countries made absolutely sure that they didn’t want to be seen in America as a partisan issue,” said Wechsler, but that’s no longer true — both because of foreign leaders who adopted a partisan sheen, and because of American politicians who went along with it.

When Republican House Speaker John Boehner invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to speak to a joint session of Congress in 2015 without informing President Barack Obama, the speech damaged Israel’s ties with Democrats for years. Israel is still dealing with the fallout.

“The end result of that is that you have a lot of people on the left that are not national security people who see this through a partisan lens, and that’s really dangerous,” Wechsler explained. “They’re opposed to strong national security relationships with Israel and they’re opposed to strong national security relationships with the Gulf, not because they’re making an analysis on national security terms but because they’re looking at it through a partisan lens and saying, ‘Those are the people that are allied with my political opponents here at home.’”

But terrorist proxies and missile attacks are not the only geopolitical commonality for Israel and the UAE. Both countries are navigating how to maintain strong relationships with Washington while also taking a more open approach to China than the U.S. might like. On Friday, when the

Olympics begin in Beijing, Israel and the UAE will not be joining Washington in its diplomatic boycott of the Winter Games.

"Neither one really sees China as a geopolitical threat in the way the United States does, and that really is more a factor of geography than anything else. Neither one really wants to have to choose between the U.S. and China," explained Michael Singh, the Lane-Swig Senior Fellow and managing director at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

In 2019, the UAE signed a \$3.4 billion deal with China as part of its global Belt and Road initiative. Israel has not gone that far, but in September, the country inaugurated a new port in Haifa that will be operated by the same Chinese company that runs China's massive Shanghai port.

"The conventional wisdom in Washington and elsewhere is that an American vacuum has enabled China and Russia to play a much more important and consequential role in the [Middle East]," Miller said in a recent public interview with Brett McGurk, assistant to the president and Middle East coordinator for the National Security Council.

"I think that is quite overstated. First of all, we are the security partner of choice across the region," McGurk responded. "This has been something we inherited. I wasn't surprised by too many things walking in the door but I actually was surprised by a few of the inroads the Chinese had made in certain areas."

CIA Director William Burns reportedly raised concerns about China in an August

meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, and Israel consulted with the U.S. before a high-level economic summit with China last month. At the meeting, Israel and China agreed to a three-year plan to increase cooperation on research and development, technology and science.

Israel and the UAE are "navigating it in similar ways," Coates said of their approach to China. "It's just very, very important that [the U.S.] continue to send the message that we want to partner with you, we want to share technology with you, we want to be partners in the future together and everything from cyber to AI. But that's going to be extremely difficult if you have exposure to China." ♦

FEBRUARY 4, 2022

A Jew on 'The View'? Some say it's long overdue

In the wake of Whoopi Goldberg's comments, Jewish thought leaders consider a potential Jewish co-host for the long-running show

By Matthew Kassel

Amid the intense fury over Whoopi Goldberg's controversial assertion that the Holocaust was "not about race" because it had involved "two groups of white people" — as the actor and comedian said on an episode of "The View" this past Monday, sparking widespread condemnation — was a somewhat more constructive plea from Jonathan Greenblatt, the chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, that has largely gone unaddressed..

Appearing on the show a day after Goldberg had made her remarks, for which she has apologized, Greenblatt took the opportunity at the end of a long and emotional discussion to suggest that the panelists consider enlisting a Jewish co-host.

"I know you guys believe in representation, and I know you guys work to bring all points of view," Greenblatt told the group before offering his advice. "Think

about having a Jewish host on this show who can bring these issues of antisemitism," he said, "who can bring these issues of representation to 'The View' every single day."

Joy Behar, one of four panelists on the long-running ABC talk show, laughed somewhat uncomfortably. "I guess I don't count because everybody thinks I'm Jewish, but I'm not," said the liberal co-host, "so maybe you're right." The discussion concluded just a couple of minutes later.

Greenblatt's suggestion was hardly an idle one. While Goldberg was suspended by ABC on Tuesday for two weeks, another seat has been vacant for months since a former co-host, the conservative foil Meghan McCain, quit last August. The search for a permanent replacement remains ongoing as the seat has been occupied by a rotating cast of guest hosts including Condoleezza Rice and Gretchen Carlson.

A spokesperson for ABC did not respond to a request for comment from Jewish Insider

about whether the network is considering hiring a Jewish panelist following the backlash elicited by Goldberg's remarks, which were criticized for their ignorance of the explicitly racial motivations behind the Nazi genocide of European Jewry.

Out of 22 co-hosts who have worked for "The View" since 1997, when the show was created, only two have been Jewish, the last of whom, the comedian Michelle Collins, departed in 2016 after just a year in the role. The broadcast journalist Barbara Walters, who helped launch the show 25 years ago, retired from her seat in 2014.

On Thursday, Greenblatt followed up on the conversation he had started, after JI inquired about his own preference for the seat. He had two picks, provided by way of an ADL spokesperson: the actress Debra Messing, who has put her Jewish identity front and center in speaking out against antisemitism and other injustices, and Juju Chang, the Korean-American "Nightline" anchor on ABC News who converted to

Judaism in the 1990s after her marriage to the media executive Neal Shapiro.

The spokesperson said Greenblatt considered Messing and Chang to be “great choices” but had no further comment.

Noa Tishby, the Israeli actress and author who splits her time between Tel Aviv and Los Angeles, said she agreed wholeheartedly with Greenblatt’s broader suggestion that “The View” consider hiring a permanent Jewish panelist. “I think the idea of adding a Jewish host is incredibly important,” she told *J* in a phone interview, “especially with the skyrocketing antisemitism.”

Tishby, who has appeared as a guest on the show and described herself as a fan and longtime viewer, said the panelists often “set the tone for pop culture conversations in America.” The fracas over Goldberg’s comments, she added, has given the show a unique “opportunity to learn” more proactively about issues of particular concern to the Jewish community.

With that in mind, *J* asked a range of Jewish figures from across the media, entertainment and nonprofit worlds about who they would prefer to see navigating such questions if “The View” were to hire a Jewish co-host.

“Is Sarah Silverman available?” said the writer and journalist Dara Horn, whose most recent book is *People Love Dead Jews: Reports From a Haunted Present*, published last September.

Silverman, the actress and comedian known for her raunchy humor and provocative commentary, was among the candidates most frequently suggested.

In recent months, she has placed herself at the center of a high-profile debate over representations of Jewish women in Hollywood, after criticizing what she described, on her podcast this past fall, as a “pattern in film” and TV in which non-Jewish actors are cast as Jewish characters — a topic of discussion that seems particularly well-suited for a show like “The View.”

Joshua Malina, the former “West Wing” actor who is himself the co-host of a new Jewish-themed podcast, “Chutzpod,” offered an additional vote in Silverman’s favor. “She’s a sharp, fierce, independent thinker, who has been making trenchant social commentary for decades,” he told

J. “She’s endlessly funny and has a huge, Jewish heart. She’d be perfect.”

“I think there’s no one better suited for that slot,” Maer Roshan, the editor of Los Angeles magazine, said of Silverman.

Another commonly cited pick was Bari Weiss, who has already appeared on “The View” as a guest host. The former *New York Times* editor who publishes a popular Substack newsletter, “Common Sense,” has previously expressed concern over instances in which, as she wrote for *Tablet* two years ago, “Jews are flattened into ‘white people,’ our living history obliterated, so that someone with a straight face can suggest that the Holocaust was merely ‘white on white crime.’”

In social media comments on Monday, Weiss reiterated that view in describing Goldberg’s remarks as a “whitewashing of the Jewish people and Jewish history.”

Bethany Mandel, the conservative columnist who is outspoken on Jewish issues, said that Weiss could help bring a renewed focus to addressing antisemitism in a manner that, she believes, has been lacking since McCain left the show.

But she was equally enthusiastic in recommending a somewhat lesser-known journalist who would be a “provocative” addition to the cast: Batya Ungar-Sargon, the former opinion editor of *The Forward* who now serves as a deputy opinion editor at *Newsweek*.

“She talks about the class issues that are happening, especially with regard to COVID, and that’s not a conversation that anyone is having,” Mandel told *J*, adding that Ungar-Sargon is “powerfully equipped to handle” the subject of antisemitism as well.

John Podhoretz, the *Commentary* editor and *New York Post* columnist, said that Mandel herself was his choice for the job, but he declined to elaborate beyond that.

In an email exchange with *J*, Sadie Stein, a freelance culture writer and a former deputy editor of *The Paris Review*, put forth a seemingly more improbable suggestion: Naomi Fry, the *New Yorker* staff writer who grew up in Israel and covers pop culture and celebrity news with wry authority.

“I’m not sure what would be in it for her,” Stein added.

Allison Josephs, the founder and executive director of *Jew In the City*,

a nonprofit dedicated to countering stereotypes associated with Orthodox Judaism, said religious Jews have, in her observation, largely been excluded from “The View,” if not mocked outright in some discussions.

One episode that she mentioned, from 2009, drew criticism from the Chabad-Lubavitch community after the Jewish actress and comedian Susie Essman, promoting her role as a Lubavitch woman in the TV movie “Loving Leah,” offered an uncharitable assessment of Hasidic fashion customs that received little to no pushback from the panelists.

“I think this Whoopi Goldberg saga is a positive overall moment because it allows a conversation to come out that has needed to be talked about for some time,” Josephs said.

Adding a Jewish co-host to “The View” would help bring a “more diverse perspective to the conversation,” said Josephs. Listing a few people offhand, she expressed a preference for Weiss in addition to Tishby and Horn — all “strong voices against antisemitism,” who are “so well-read and well-spoken,” she said.

Eve Barlow, a Scottish journalist in Los Angeles who often writes about antisemitism, suggested the actress Goldie Hawn before settling on the singer and actress Barbra Streisand, who “knows how to stand up against antisemitism” and — perhaps as important — “has the best nails of all time.”

Streisand has said it is “undeniable that antisemitism is one of the most vexing, terrifying issues of our times.”

Still, some observers questioned, among other things, whether “The View” was even in need of a full-time Jewish co-host at all.

“I don’t think the answer is to have a co-host of every religion or ethnicity about which others express ignorant or even hateful comments. Or even to banish people so that their education is hidden,” David Wolpe, the senior rabbi at Sinai Temple, a Conservative synagogue in Los Angeles, told *J*. “Rather they should invite people on who can speak intelligently about it and enlighten both viewers and hosts.”

Meanwhile, Emily Tamkin, the U.S. editor of the *New Statesman* and the author of a forthcoming book, *Bad Jews*:

A History of American Jewish Politics and Identities, expressed reservations over what she described as “a tendency to turn to the person of a certain identity to speak with authority on issues related to that identity.”

There is “no one Jewish perspective,” Tamkin explained, “no one ‘Jewish View,’ if you will.”

“I hope that whoever fills this hypothetical role is fully cognizant of that,

and speaks as a Jewish person, and in a way that is informed by being Jewish, but with an appreciation that she cannot speak for or on behalf of Jewish people,” Tamkin said. “No one can.” ♦