

## **Maxwell Frost Jewish Insider Questionnaire**

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

Ten years ago, after seeing the horrifying news of the Sandy Hook shooting on TV, I flew up to Washington D.C. for the vigil and to lobby members of Congress to enact gun reform. There I met Matthew Soto, brother of Vicki Soto, who was a teacher at that elementary school who hid her students in cabinets when she heard gunshots. She died protecting her class. Seeing Matthew, devastated, crying because his sister was murdered just for going to school, changed my life. That night I went home and dedicated my life to fighting for a world where nobody ever experiences what Matthew, the survivors, parents, teachers, and community members went through.

That has been my mission over the past ten years of my life. In Congress, I'm going to do everything in my power to pass legislation that will save lives and stop the senseless violence that plagues our country.

### **2) Which organizations or leaders do you consult with for advice on policy? Are there any whose views particularly align with yours?**

Mondaire Jones and Ritchie Torres are two members of Congress who I frequently go to for advice and have been great mentors to me. When it comes to passing Build Back Better I'm 100% with Joe Biden. When it comes to adding additional justices to the Supreme Court I'm with Mondaire Jones. As it relates to taxing the wealthy and large corporations - I'm with Senator Elizabeth Warren.

### **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?**

There is a scourge of antisemitism in our country, throughout the world, and here in Orlando, where recently Nazis paraded down our streets, demonstrated, and spread hate. We must stand with our Jewish brothers, sisters, and siblings, and fight back against this hate and work toward a truly inclusive and tolerant society, where this is no longer a fact of life.

I'm a supporter of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. Passing that bill would be a strong start to making the necessary changes to public safety. We also need to fund community violence intervention, which funds community programs that stop violence before it even happens. Communities should be at the center of lowering crime in the US.

I was also very pleased the Nonprofit Security Grant Program Improvement Act passed the House, which would nearly triple the budget for the Nonprofit Security Grants Program, bringing it to \$500 million annually for the next 5 years. This will go a long way in meeting the heightened security costs for houses of worship and other non profits and help them to be as protected as possible.

To effectively combat violent antisemitism we need a multi-pronged strategy, because it's not just individuals from extremist movements perpetrating these crimes. Antisemitism has increasingly become more normalized and we have to change that.

There are things that we need to do right away to safeguard Jewish people from violence like making real investments in the security of Jewish places of gathering, including places of worship and educational and cultural spaces. We need to better educate people about antisemitism and what it looks like; help people better understand the atrocities of the Holocaust; and promote Jewish history and culture. We need to pass national legislation that better identifies and reports on antisemitism. We have to increase interfaith dialogue and strengthen intercommunal cooperation. By taking the above steps we can start making significant and important reductions in antisemitic violence.

**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.**

Our relationship with Israel is a strategic asset to the United States because it promotes regional stability and is an effective way for us to pursue foreign policy goals in the Middle East.

**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?**

The Iron Dome is a missile defense system that's used to intercept missiles and destroy them. It helps to keep its citizens safe from terrorist attacks and rocket fire. In the summer of 2021, thousands of rockets were launched into Israel with the goal of killing Israelis, so the Iron Dome system needed to be replenished. Israel is an important ally of the United States that acted in response to terrorist attacks in order to defend itself. I would have voted to support this important legislative package that helps to keep people safe.

**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?**

I am committed to supporting Israel's important security needs. I also support the MOU signed by President Obama, which helps ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative military edge and can properly defend itself. There are certainly times where it makes sense to condition our foreign aid. However, I do not believe that we should condition 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?**

A diplomacy-first approach to the Middle East region as a whole can help to quell tension and be a part of facilitating peace. This includes the The Abraham Accords and the Israel Relations Normalizations Act that builds off it. They are an important effort of US leadership to help broker peace and is a call to “develop and implement a regional strategy to encourage economic cooperation among Israel, Arab states and the Palestinians to enhance the prospects for regional peace, respect for human rights, transparent governance, and cooperation.”

While the normalization of relations between Israel and many Arab nations is a great breakthrough for the region and Israel, we should be clear eyed in our understanding that a truly comprehensive peace between Israel, Palestinians, and other countries in the Arab world can only be achieved by resolving the core issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately leads to the creation of an independent Palestinian state that exists alongside Israel.

That being said, the United States has an important responsibility to help be a part of brokering a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians, so that they can both exist in peace and live a life free from the threat of violence.

To achieve that on the Palestinian side, it means the basic recognition that Israel has a right to exist; an end to all terrorism, an end to their Martyrs Fund, and an end to the antisemitism of Palestinian political leadership. Israel too has steps it needs to take toward peace, including an end to the annexation of land in the West Bank, no further settlement expansion and no more evictions or demolitions of homes. This will put both sides in a stronger position to achieve peace.

I will do everything in my power to make sure the United States steps up to serve in this critical role. It's important to note that peace can only be achieved through bilateral talks between the two parties negotiating in good faith with the goal of long-lasting, sustained 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?**

The United States must do everything in its power to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, which would pose an existential threat to Israel and make the Middle East and the world a much more unsafe place. If Iran were to get its hands on a nuclear weapon, it could set off a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and incentivize other countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey to

achieve these sorts of capabilities themselves. This would compound the current security risks to Israel, other countries in the Middle East, and the world.

The original Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) blocked Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon, which was an important success. The Trump administration should have never abandoned the deal because doing so made Israel and the world less safe and undermined peace and security in the region. I strongly support restoring the JCPOA, but would ideally like to make it longer, stronger, and broader to cover not just the issue of nuclear weapons, but the full range of destabilizing and threatening actions Iran engages in.

**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.**

Government entities should only engage in business in a way that upholds society's values including equity, justice, and opposing discrimination in every form.

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

As a supporter of a two-state solution, I believe BDS is problematic and undermines the chances of peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. I do not support it.

**11) Anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism**

I strongly oppose antisemitism in every form.

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

Preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon should be a top foreign policy goal for the United States and we need to make sure that we do everything in our power to see that goal through.