

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties

From: Mark Mellman, President & CEO Democratic Majority for Israel

Date: May 29, 2024

Re: Support For Pro-Israel Policies Is Not Damaging

We've seen and heard the argument a thousand times: the Biden Administration's support for Israel is exacting a price.

Before we said there was no evidence to support that proposition. Now we can be more definitive: it just isn't true.

- The *New York Times* tried to reach that conclusion but failed. In response to an open-ended question, only 2% of voters cited Israel/Hamas/Gaza/Palestinians as the most important issue deciding their vote. No questions on the poll assess the portion of that two percent who support Israel or are opponents.
- The *Times* tried to make it look like a bigger problem by adding to this 2% a larger group of 5% who cited foreign policy generally as their most important issue. But these people did not reference Israel/Hamas/Gaza/Palestinians in describing their most important issue. We don't know which aspect of foreign policy was critical to them. The *Times* then calculated that 13% of Biden defectors cited EITHER Gaza OR foreign policy generally as their top issue. Again, though, just 2% mentioned Palestine, Israel, or Gaza, and we don't know which side they support.

Commentors constantly tell us the Muslim American vote in Michigan is so large and so angry at the President for his Middle East policies, they could deny him victory there.

- Like the exit polls, the *Times*/Siena survey found that Muslims constitute less than 1% of the likely electorate in Michigan while Jews comprise 2%.
- We're told Michigan is ground zero for the Arab American revolt against the President's pro-Israel policies. However, Michigan is the one swing state Biden is actually winning among the likely electorate in the *Times*/Siena polls, albeit by a mere one point. Indeed, the President's position in Michigan actually improved ever so slightly and has not deteriorated.

National polls also reveal the de minimis effect of the war on the President's standing.

- Similar to the *Times* poll, but in response to a closed-ended question posed by the Harris Poll, just 3% of voters said the Israel/Hamas war was the most important issue to them.
- In that same poll, 80% of Americans supported Israel over Hamas in the conflict. Just 20% supported Hamas.
- 72% of voters said Israel “should...move forward with an operation in Rafah to finish the war with Hamas, doing its best to avoid civilian casualties even though there will be casualties;” 28% said Israel should “back off now and allow Hamas to continue running Gaza.”
- In 538’s national poll aggregation, 39.1% approved of Biden’s performance on October 6th, just before the Hamas attack. On May 1st it was an identical 39.1%. No effect.
- According to RealClearPolitics’ aggregation of horse race polls, Trump led by 1.1 points on October 6th. Today Trump leads by 1.2 points. No change.

Recent local data also confirms that being pro-Israel is not harmful to one’s political health, as pro-Israel figures are more popular than those on the opposite side of the spectrum.

- Our sister organization, DMFI PAC, did not engage in Rep. Summer Lee’s primary reelection but did accurately poll the race in early April (showing her with a 19-point margin in a race she ultimately won by 21). Central, though, is the fact that the anti-Israel Lee was far less popular among primary voters in her district than the decidedly pro-Israel Sen. John Fetterman and President Biden. Lee’s favorables exceeded her unfavorables by +27 points. Fetterman (+49) and Biden (+53) are significantly more popular than Lee.
- Anti-Israel Rep. Jamaal Bowman is much less popular among primary voters in his district (+4), with the pro-Israel Joe Biden far better liked (+71).
- President Biden’s favorables are 25-points higher than Rep. Cori Bush’s in her district and 19-points higher than Ilhan Omar’s in hers.

A large majority of Americans remain pro-Israel, relatively few see the war as a key issue, and the data indicate taking a pro-Israel stance is, if anything, a political benefit, not a liability.