

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 5, 2014

CONTACT: Jessica Rosenblum, 202.448.1600 (O) or 202.279.0005 (M),
Jessica@jstreet.org

JStreetPAC Sends Most Endorsees Yet to Congress *Record Breaking +\$2.4M for 95 Pro-Israel, Pro-Peace Candidates*

WASHINGTON—JStreetPAC will send its largest-ever class of endorsees—72 Representatives* and 12 Senators—to the 114th Congress, following another record-breaking election cycle for the country’s largest pro-Israel PAC, which contributed over \$2.4 million to candidates.

The pro-Israel, pro-peace PAC endorsed a total of 95 candidates in 86 House and nine Senate races this year; 77 won their races or are leading in the vote. Fifty percent more JStreetPAC endorsees will serve in the Senate than in the last term and nearly 40 percent of the House Democratic Caucus is now endorsed. Despite the anti-incumbent mood of the electorate, over 90 percent of endorsed incumbents will return to Congress.

The 2014 PAC class is diverse, including Republicans and Democrats, Jews and Arab-Americans, first-time challengers and key members of Senate and House leadership, like Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin and Assistant Minority Leader James Clyburn.

“Our success last night is proof that for an ever-growing number of politically-minded American Jews who are invested in Israel’s democratic and Jewish future, the address for pro-Israel giving is JStreetPAC,” said J Street President Jeremy Ben-Ami.

Contributions from JStreetPAC account for approximately 40 percent of all pro-Israel PAC giving in this cycle. The PAC raised more money this year for Democratic candidates than the total of all thirty other pro-Israel PACs combined.

JStreetPAC’s innovative use of online fundraising mobilized thousands of small donors in parallel with a network of high-level political donors. The PAC also held dozens of fundraising events attended by the candidates across the country. In total, several thousand people have contributed to pro-Israel, pro-peace candidates through the PAC this cycle, with an average donation size of \$217.

JStreetPAC also provides support to candidates speaking about Middle East policy issues. This year, for the first time, the PAC organized a program to send J Street staff and activists to volunteer on endorsees’ campaigns across the country.

“We’ve become an essential stop on the campaign trail for those candidates, who like the majority of pro-Israel Americans, believe that the two-state solution is a vital US and Israeli interest,” said Dan Kalik, J Street’s political director. “With JStreetPAC’s track record of success in wins and dollars raised, we have effectively established that taking pro-Israel, pro-peace positions is an asset to candidates.”

JStreetPAC endorsed candidates in four of the most closely watched Senate races in the country— Sen. Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire, Michelle Nunn in Georgia, Rep. Bruce Braley in Iowa and Sen. Mark Udall in Colorado. The PAC raised an average of \$190,000 in each of these competitive races.

When Shaheen, who won a hard fought race against former Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown, was attacked by the New Hampshire Republican Party for her ties to JStreetPAC, PAC supporters from across the country rallied to her defense. An online appeal with the subject line “They Think You’re Fringe” garnered more than \$30,000 in primarily small-dollar donations to the campaign in less than a week. J Street produced a [direct mail piece](#) highlighting Shaheen’s strong foreign policy credentials.

“We’ve seen this dynamic play out over and over again in our election work,” said Kalik. “When opponents hurl spurious allegations about our endorsees’ pro-Israel bona fides, those opponents become a liability to their own campaign. I really think this accounts for the sharp decline in attacks on our candidates from cycle to cycle.”

Unlike most other pro-Israel PACs, which abide by the “friendly incumbent” rule—the practice of backing sitting members—JStreetPAC is far less risk averse. In this election cycle, the PAC contributed to the victories of a number of new voices, including Gwen Graham (D, FL-2), Pete Aguilar (D, CA-31) and Don Beyer (D,VA-8).

“We’re quite comfortable with the idea that elevating the pro-Israel, pro-peace voices in Congress in many cases requires backing emerging leaders willing to break with the old notion that supporting Israel requires walking in lock-step with every Israeli policy--even ones that harm both Israel and its relationship with the US,” said Kalik. “To us, gambling on challengers willing and able to lead in a new direction is an investment worth making.”

According to an election night poll of American Jewish voters [[link](#)] conducted by [Gerstein | Bocian | Agne Strategies](#) and released by J Street, candidates who take pro-Israel, pro-peace stances will find strong backing within the American Jewish community. Eighty percent of Jewish voters strongly support a two-state solution that establishes a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, which they say is necessary to strengthen Israel’s security and ensure its Jewish, democratic character (78 percent) and that it is a vital national security interest for the US (75 percent). Eighty-five percent believe the US should play an active role in helping the parties to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

“JStreetPAC was created to demonstrate the wellspring of political support that exists for candidates willing to lead in a new direction in the Middle East,” said Ben-Ami. “Given widespread support among American Jews for pro-Israel, pro-peace policies and the PAC’s track record, we fully expect to build on this success for elections to come.”

** Count includes candidates who have won and those leading in the vote.*