

To: Interested Parties
From: GBA Strategies
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2014 Post-Election Jewish Surveys Summary Findings
National Survey of Jewish Voters

An election night survey of Jewish voters shows that American Jews continue to vote as a base Democratic constituency that seeks assertive US leadership to help resolve the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.¹ Despite the Republican gains in the US Senate and House during the 2014 mid-term election, Jews voted for the Democratic candidate for Congress by a 69 to 28 percent margin.

Looking ahead to the 2016 Presidential election, Jews appear to be highly energized for a Hillary Clinton candidacy if she decides to run. Clinton currently holds large leads against Jeb Bush (69 to 24 percent) and Rand Paul (71 to 22 percent), and she would have broad backing across the Jewish population.

While American Jews closely align with Democratic candidates, American Jewish values also closely aligned with the values and vision advanced by the Obama Administration both in its approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in the negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. Notably, at a time when Prime Minister Netanyahu and senior members of his cabinet have been highly critical of the Obama Administration's efforts to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 74 percent of American Jews want the United States to play an active role even if it means exerting pressure on both the Israelis and Palestinians. When presented with a detailed final status agreement along the lines of the Clinton parameters, 76 percent of Jews support the agreement.

The negotiations with Iran present another area where American Jews are following developments and strongly side with the Obama Administration's policy. A large majority says that they have heard a great deal (16 percent) or some (48 percent) information about the first step agreement reached with Iran last year, and 84 percent of American Jews support a final agreement that allows nuclear development for civilian energy purposes, places international inspectors at Iranian nuclear facilities, and reduces sanctions on Iran as it meets compliance benchmarks.

¹ GBA Strategies conducted a national survey on November 4, 2014 of 800 American Jews who voted in the 2014 mid-term election. The survey methodology is detailed at the end of this memo, and full results can be accessed at jstreet.org.

Despite major events, US-Israel controversies, and a tense situation on the ground in Israel, American Jewish public opinion remains deeply rooted in a progressive worldview that strongly supports American leadership and the Obama Administration's engagement that seeks to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and reach a diplomatic solution with Iran.

Key Findings

- **2014 Jewish vote driven by a sense of shared values with Democrats, support for President Obama and the Democratic Party, and a deep distaste for the Republicans.** President Obama's job approval among Jews (57 percent) is 15 points higher than his approval among the general US population, and his approval far exceeds Congress 18 percent job approval. As we have witnessed in other recent elections, Jews view the Republican Party very negatively (20 percent favorable / 71 percent unfavorable) and they do not like prominent Republican figures like John Boehner (12 percent favorable / 65 percent unfavorable) and Mitch McConnell (10 percent favorable / 56 percent unfavorable).
- **The Jewish vote is not up for grabs.** There has been a remarkable consistency in the Jewish vote for Congress over the past 3 elections, including 66 percent for Democrats in 2010, 69 percent in 2012, and 69 percent in 2014.
- **Jewish issue priorities center on the economy and health care.** When asked to identify the two most important issues in deciding their vote for Congress, 44 percent cited the economy and 31 percent cited health care. Following these top tier issues, Social Security and Medicare (20 percent), terrorism and national security (17 percent), and the deficit (16 percent) constitute the next tier of issue priorities for Jews. Israel is cited by 8 percent, and ranks 10th on a list of 14 issues.
- **American Jews care deeply about Israel and rally behind the Jewish State, particularly when it comes under physical attack.** More than 4-in-5 American Jews closely followed the news about this summer's military conflict between Israeli and Hamas, and 80 percent approved of the military operation (Operation Protective Edge). This is very similar to the 75 percent approval rating of Israel's military operation (Operation Cast Lead) that took place 5 years ago. A majority of Jews (55 percent) also believe that Protective Edge made Israel more secure, which is 14 points higher than how American Jews reacted to the effectiveness of Cast Lead.
- **American Jews also overwhelmingly support US leadership to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.** The belief in American engagement to reach diplomatic solutions defines Jews' approach to Middle East policy. It is striking to see the consistency in Jewish responses to questions about whether the US

should play an active role to help Israelis and Palestinians reach an agreement. Since we first began asking this question in 2008, support for the US role has repeatedly been in the mid-80s (and is 85 percent in this latest poll). Similarly, support for US engagement, even if it means public disagreements (72 percent) or public pressure (74 percent) on both Israelis and Palestinians, is remarkably consistent over the past 6 years.

- **...And American Jews seek a final status agreement and they support the US present the deal's parameters as a basis for the parties to return to negotiations.** When presented with a detailed final status agreement that reflects the Clinton parameters and subsequent negotiations, 76 percent of Jewish voters support the agreement. Further demonstrating American Jews' fundamental belief in US engagement, 77 percent support would like to see the US present the agreement and ask the parties to return to the negotiating table based on the parameters outlined in the agreement.
- **Most Jews believe construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank should be suspended or restricted to certain areas, and large numbers of Jews think Netanyahu's policies have hurt Israel's relations with the United States.** Only 20 percent of Jewish voters think that Israel should build settlements in any area of the West Bank that it wants, and the vast majority want Israel to suspend all construction (28 percent) or suspend construction outside the core settlement blocs (52 percent). When asked about the impact of Netanyahu's policies, 40 percent say his policies have hurt relations with the US, 21 percent say his policies have helped relations, and 40 percent say the policies have had no impact.

Concluding Note

As President Obama heads into his final two years in office and a new Republican majority takes hold in the Senate, we can expect some high profile battles to emerge around Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Iranian negotiations. This is a new dynamic and there are many unanswered questions regarding how the Administration, Netanyahu, and the Republicans will sort out their differences. But the data clearly provide an answer to one key question: US political leaders who seek agreements on the Israeli-Palestinian and Iranian fronts will have strong support from American Jews.

GBA Strategies designed the questionnaire for this national survey of American Jews who voted in the 2014 general election. The survey was conducted November 4, 2014 and includes 800 self-identified Jewish voters. The survey is subject to a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. GBA Strategies contracted the research

company Mountain West Research Center to administer the survey by email invitation to its web-based panel, which is regularly updated and consists of nearly 900,000 Americans.

Respondents were screened at the beginning of the survey when they were first asked for their religion and then, if they did not identify themselves as Jewish by religion, they were asked again if they considered themselves Jewish.

The full survey results, including full question wording and crosstabs are available at jstreet.org.