



# GOP Senate Contender Kirk Is Favorite Of Pro-Israel PACs

Justin Elliott | February 4, 2010, 11:28AM

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Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL)

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prominent senators like Joe Lieberman.

With polls showing Kirk in a strong position in his Senate race, activists and liberal Mideast policy groups are concerned that he could become AIPAC's point man in the Senate. (It's worth noting that AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is a lobbying organization and does not donate to campaigns.)

Kirk's campaign Web site calls the congressman a "pro-Israel champion," listing accomplishments against Iran and Hamas. His Democratic opponent, Alexi Giannoulias, also touts "unwavering" support for Israel, though his site also endorses a two-state solution, which Kirk's does not.

In the House, Kirk has been a driving force behind a host of legislative efforts to sanction Iran (he's the founder of the Iran Working Group), increase U.S. military support of Israel (including the integration of Israel into the American ballistic missile defense system), and cut any U.S. support for Palestinians (he wants to slash funding for the UN agency that is charged with aiding refugees).

He was also one of the leaders of the campaign against Chas Freeman, an Obama pick for the National Intelligence Council whose nomination was killed after a campaign by the pro-Israel community.

Kirk caused a mini controversy when, during the invasion of Gaza last year, he said: "To misquote Shakespeare, something is rotten in Gaza and now it's time to take out the trash."

Republican Rep. Mark Kirk enters the Illinois Senate race as the member of the House who has consistently reaped the biggest contribution totals from pro-Israel PACs, making a name for himself through five terms in Congress as a hardline leader on legislation relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Kirk, who is considered a moderate Republican on most issues, sailed to an easy victory in the GOP primary this week and goes into the general election race as a strong contender for Barack Obama's old Senate seat.

There are plenty of members of Congress who subscribe to the same hawkish pro-Israel positions as Kirk. But the money totals (and his legislative record) show that Kirk is a particular favorite of the pro-Israel community.

In 2008, for example, Kirk got \$414,000 from pro-Israel PACs, more than double the haul of the next biggest recipient in the House, and behind only Barack Obama, John McCain, and Hillary Clinton overall, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

With \$108,000 in pro-Israel PAC donations in the current cycle, Kirk is second overall (to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid), and easily the biggest recipient in the House. He was the second biggest recipient of pro-Israel dollars in 2006. And his career total is \$1,025,000, seventh overall of any member of Congress, and behind only

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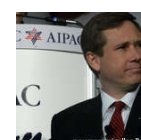
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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 11:54 AM

"he could become AIPAC's point man in the Senate."



To fight anti-Israel radicals like Lieberman?

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 3:51 PM in reply to [Why oh why](#)



AIPAC has been contributing to American candidates since its inception. Now, how is it the Supreme Court ruling enhances that ability?

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 11:55 AM



I thank G-d that AIPAC has about 85 men and 10 women in the Senate, including progressive Dick Durbin, who consistently support its positions. Either Senatorial candidate in Illinois will take the same positions on actual votes-- dealing with resolutions and Israel aid appropriations-- as Dick does. If you don't like it, you are free under the First Amendment to try to elect pro-Hamas Senators.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:01 PM in reply to [bal4](#)



right, we need even more congressmen who care more about Israel and sending billions of our tax dollars to them as opposed to our own country and citizens. And they get universal healthcare while your hero Lieberscum denies it to Americans.

Thanks for identifying yourself as another anti-American.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:18 PM in reply to [bal4](#)



I'm having a hard time parsing your statement, bal4. Are you implying that the only options are Kirk-style pro-Isreal stances or being pro-Hamas? I hope there's some sarcasm or irony in there that I'm not detecting, because one can simultaneously oppose Hamas and be critical of AIPAC and Israel. The sort of binary you set up doesn't help anyone, including Israel.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 4:02 PM in reply to [JC Aevaliotis](#)



Oddly enough, I don't think there is any sarcasm in that statement. Trust me, there are plenty of Isreali double agents in our Congress.

How else do you explain our policies in the ME?

Anybody remember the Jane Harman spy scandal?

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:22 PM in reply to [bal4](#)



bal4 should thanks Mammon not G\_d.

Mammon is the god that the pro-Israel bribers bow down to, as do their numerous bribees in both chambers of Congress.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 3:58 PM in reply to [bal4](#)



Or how about, PRO-AMERICAN politicians?

Go back to YOUR country!

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:12 PM



Anti-American and anti-Israeli, too.

You can bet that AIPAC has done its damndest to fight against the left in Israel, with its acolytes even accusing the left of being "un-Israeli" (just like the Republicans' treatment of Democrats here).

Progressives in Israel, though marginalized by the right, don't like AIPAC much more than progressives here.

As a progressive Jew with no patience for "Israel-firsters" — who are, inevitably, really Likud-firsters — I think it's an important distinction to make.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 1:03 PM in reply to biryanifan



Very well stated. You have to read the foreign press or work abroad to realize that the most heated debate about Israeli policies occurs within Israel itself. We do not have such a debate here. Few American politicians can survive while espousing a more balanced debate, let alone advocating policies that are favored by a very large minority in Israel.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 2:23 PM in reply to biryanifan



AIPAC is ultimately about money. Jews statewide (as opposed to Kirk's Lake County turf) still vote at least 75/25 Democratic.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:25 PM



Way to put israeli policy over your constituents Kirk. I can't wait for israel and iran to nuke each other so scum like this go away! And we don't have to send 3 BILLION a year to israel.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 3:28 PM in reply to madmatt



Nothing like advocating the nuclear annihilation of two countries to really elevate the discussion.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:34 PM



Kirk is a radical Likud-firster. He is completely unhinged on the subject of the Middle East, probably even more so than Lieberman.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 12:55 PM



Kirk's district is heavily Jewish and pro-Israel, so to argue that he puts Israel ahead of his constituents is pretty ridiculous. His constituents tend to be pretty strongly pro-Israel. And Illinois is a state that will consistently elect pro-Israel senators, for demographic reasons.

How is this even a story? Where was the story that Harry Reid receives the most of any senator from pro-Israel groups? Or that Barack Obama received a lot? What has Kirk done that's controversial on this issue--especially compared to some of the wingers in his party?

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 1:27 PM in reply to jweitz



Harry and Barck are scumbags too

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 1:47 PM



From George Washington's Farewell Address:

(A) passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favourite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels & Wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification: It leads also to concessions to the favourite Nation of priviledges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions--by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained--& by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equl priviledges are withheld: And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favourite Nation) facility to betray, or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity, gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition corruption or infatuation.

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FEBRUARY 4, 2010 2:00 PM in reply to Egypt Steve



Great selection from the first of perhaps the two most important Farewell Addresses, in terms of advising on current issues. The second would be by Eisenhower, in my opinion: his prescient warning of the growing threat to our democracy from the military-industrial complex.

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