

Discredited DSA Democrat Jamaal Bowman loses primary to well-funded challenger George Latimer

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In the most expensive congressional primary in US history, incumbent New York Rep. Jamaal Bowman, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, was defeated by his well-funded Democratic Party opponent, George Latimer, currently the executive of Westchester County. While running as the challenger, the longtime fixture in the Democratic Party establishment was in no sense an underdog, but enjoyed robust support from Zionist lobbying groups and fellow party leaders, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Axios reported that as of June 20, American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the largest Zionist lobbying group in the US, had spent at least \$14.5 million on anti-Bowman ads. These ads did not focus on Israel and were paid for through its PAC, United Democracy Project. Democratic Majority for Israel, another Zionist lobby that operates in the Democratic Party, spent another \$425,000 on television advertisements boosting Latimer.

Tuesday's race was called by the AP within 30 minutes of the polls closing. As of this writing, 88 percent of the vote has been tallied with Latimer holding a roughly 17-point advantage. Latimer is widely expected to defeat his Republican challenger this November; the last time the New York district elected a Republican was in 1945.

Within the 16th Congressional District, roughly 90 percent of the eligible voters are from Westchester County which includes the wealthy suburbs of Scarsdale and Rye, as well as the more working-class Yonkers and White Plains. The district also includes a sliver of the north Bronx including the Cornerstone Academy for Social Action Middle School, the school founded by former principal Bowman.

With a median household income of nearly \$100,000, the 16th is one of the wealthiest districts in the country. The urban district is ethnically diverse with over 50 percent identifying as either Black or Hispanic. A large Jewish population also resides in the district; a 2023 study conducted by the United Jewish Appeal-Federation (UJA)

estimated that 88,000 Jewish adults live in Westchester County.

In January, CBS News reported that a Jewish group known as "Westchester Unites" was registering Republican and independent voters as Democrats in the lead-up to the primary in support of Latimer and against "antisemitism." In a graphic shared Wednesday, the group boasted that it mobilized "15,508 Jewish voters ... to get out and vote in the election." The graphic noted that this was more than the 12,816 votes that currently constitute the difference between Bowman and Latimer.

Bowman is the first member of the pseudo-left "Squad" to be defeated in a re-election bid. The Squad is a self-declared group of "progressives" and sometimes "democratic socialists" that formed in 2018 following the election to Congress of New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan. Bowman, alongside Missouri Rep. Cori Bush, joined the group in 2020, followed by Reps. Greg Casar (Texas), Summer Lee (Pennsylvania) and Delia Ramirez (Texas) in 2022.

Bowman was targeted because he was increasingly seen as a liability by the party elite. Under conditions where genocide is being "normalized" by the US imperialism and its ruling class, Bowman, a supporter of Israel's "right to exist," who at various times has been critical of the Netanyahu regime, was deemed insufficiently loyal, while Latimer, who was recruited by AIPAC last year, is reliably "pro-Israel."

After polling earlier this year showed Bowman down by double-digits to Latimer, the DSA, Justice Democrats, Working Families Party and other pseudo-left elements attempted to rescue Bowman's campaign. However, as last weekend's rally in the Bronx featuring Ocasio-Cortez and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders demonstrated, working class support for the "left" face of the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street and the CIA, has collapsed.

In his victory speech Tuesday night, Latimer called for “unity” across the political continuum while condemning “extremists” on the “far right” and “far left,” in the process drawing an equal signs between fascists, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and socialists.

“We have to look at the arguments of the far right and far left and say, ‘You cannot destroy this country with your rhetoric and your arguments,’” Latimer told supporters Tuesday night. The 70-year-old Democrat promised to work “across the aisle” to “get things done.”

In his concession speech, Bowman blamed his defeat solely on AIPAC, calling it “a super-PAC of dark money” that spent “\$20 million to brainwash people into believing something that isn’t true.”

He vowed to continue to fight to build “a multiracial, multi-ethnic democracy that works for everyone,” and left open the possibility of running again in another district. Bowman bragged that he and his campaign manager raised “\$5 million in six months.” He added, “If we can raise \$5 million in 6 months, imagine what we can do in a year, year and a half... I’m still a damn good candidate.”

Bowman was first elected in 2020 after a primary victory against incumbent Democrat Eliot Engel, who like Latimer enjoyed robust support from AIPAC. Bowman could not overcome the outsized spending of Zionist lobbies in this most recent election because he offered nothing but empty racist demagoguery to working class and younger voters.

While the mainstream press is framing Bowman’s loss as a setback for “the left,” the fact is Bowman (along with the DSA, AOC and Sanders) has nothing to do with socialism or genuine left-wing politics. Bowman wasn’t and isn’t a principled defender of the Palestinian people; he voted to fund the Iron Dome in 2021 and since October 7, he has gone out of his way to denounce Hamas as “terrorists” even as the Palestinian death toll nears 50,000.

In an interview with WNYC earlier this month, Bowman again stated his support for a “two-state” solution and said that Hamas “as currently constructed as a terrorist organization, cannot be a part of that conversation politically.”

Asked to comment on the decision by J Street, a “liberal” Zionist group, to pull their support of him, a defensive Bowman replied, “I don’t know if their reason for doing that was because I was anti-Israel, because I am not anti-Israel. I support Israel’s right to exist.”

While recently denouncing Israel’s military campaign as a “genocide,” Bowman, like the rest of the Democratic Party, fully supports “Genocide Joe” Biden’s reelection campaign. In the same interview with WNYC, Bowman repeatedly aligned himself with the administration’s warmongering agenda. “We have been working with President Biden since

we’ve gotten into office,” Bowman boasted at one point, adding, “We have directly worked with President Biden.”

While occasionally criticizing and voting in opposition to Israeli military funding, Bowman, like every Democrat, fully backs the US-NATO war with Russia. Earlier this year, Bowman voted in favor of over \$60 billion in military support to Ukraine.

In domestic politics, Bowman, Ocasio-Cortez and 209 other Democrats revealed themselves to be loyal class warriors for big business. Bowman was one of three DSA members to vote in favor of House Joint Resolution 100, which banned railroad workers from striking after they had rejected a pro-company Wall Street-endorsed contract.

While the outsized spending of Zionist groups no doubt played a role in Tuesday’s race, Bowman’s defeat was the result of his and the DSA’s own discredited politics, coupled with his unstinting support for Biden, who is responsible for innumerable war crimes and attacks on the international working class.

Bowman’s defeat underscores that there is no electoral solution to the problems facing the working class in New York, or anywhere else. As US imperialism careens towards World War III with Russia, and soon China and Iran, the Democratic Party works with Zionist apologists for genocide and increasingly fascist “Republican colleagues” to enact their shared warmongering agenda. This includes the passage of multi-billion-dollar weapons packages coupled with attacks on the living standards and economic position of the working class.

The movement to stop genocide, imperialist war and inequality requires a complete break with the Democratic Party and the building of a mass independent socialist movement led by the working class. This movement must be in opposition to the entire US government, all of its policies and those of its imperialist allies.



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