

Pro-Israel mailer ahead of hot Iowa elections shows new influence efforts

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Iowans who received printed mailers distributed on behalf of the state of Israel may not realize the extent of the political influence operation they are part of.

Des Moines Register staff recently received at their homes in Urbandale and West Des Moines printed mailers touting the importance of a strong security relationship between the U.S. and Israel, and economic benefits for Iowa from Israeli trade and research investments.

Iowa law prohibits foreign nationals from directly or indirectly making expenditures that advocate for the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate, or the passage or defeat of a ballot issue.

The mailers distributed by Clock Tower X LLC on behalf of the state of Israel did not criticize, endorse or name any Iowa candidates, and neither did the website the mailers linked to.

But Israel's political spending — or any foreign government's — comes as Iowa's U.S. House and Senate races are among the most watched in the country ahead of the Nov. 3 midterm elections.

And the midterms could shift the balance of power in one or both legislative bodies from Republican to Democratic control, which could have policy implications for the U.S.-Israeli relationship.

Brad Parscale, the person behind Clock Tower X — contracted for tens of millions of dollars to push Israeli interests — did not respond to requests for comment on which, if any particular Iowa elections the mailers might be trying to connect with voters in and why.

But based on political attention and where Register staff received the mailers, the possibilities include Iowa's U.S. Senate race and 3rd Congressional District race.

Iowa mailers tied to big spend for Israel led by former Trump campaign official

Parscale registered Clock Tower X LLC as a foreign agent company in September 2025 with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Axios reported Parscale was the senior adviser for data and digital operations for President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign and the campaign manager for over two years on Trump's 2020 campaign.

The company's officially stated purpose is to develop and execute national media campaigns in the U.S. to combat antisemitism on behalf of the state of Israel through the HAVAS Media Network, according to DOJ filings.

Clock Tower X has a network of social media pages and websites that worked toward that end in 2026.

But filings showed written and visual content also touted the importance of Israel's relationship with the United States, highlighted Israeli scientific and tech innovations, critiqued American "anti-Israel" activism, critiqued the Trump administration's plan to end the war in Gaza, critiqued media coverage of the war in Gaza, accused international aid groups' staff members of alleged links to "terrorist activity," critiqued Palestinian authorities, and discussed the U.S. and Israeli governments' shared foreign policy objectives and activities — especially the war against Iran's regime that's also helping to feed discontent among American voters ahead of the midterms.

The company's initial four-month contract was worth \$6 million. But a filing from June included an invoice with HAVAS Media that showed Clock Tower X's monthly fee for digital advertising services would be \$4.5 million from April through October.

That's \$31.5 million of digital advertising in the lead up to the U.S. midterm elections, with much of the content being tailored to Gen Z audiences on platforms including TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and podcasts, and to influence how artificial intelligence agents characterize Israel.

After news broke last year about Parscale registering Clock Tower X as a foreign agent company, he wrote in a column on Townhall.com: "Unlike those who quietly cash checks from America's enemies, I followed the law, filed publicly, and said out loud what I believe: Israel is our ally, antisemitism is rising, and Western civilization is under attack. I won't apologize for telling the truth or for volunteering to be on the front lines of the most important ideological battle of our era."

The Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft — a Washington-based think tank — noted in a July 2026 report on Israel's increasing public diplomacy spending and shift toward more direct appeals to American voters that Clock Tower X was being paid the most out of firms that had recently registered as foreign agents for Israel.

The Institute's report noted 17 new firms had registered in 2024 and 2025 as foreign agents working for Israeli interests, with Clock Tower X being paid the most of those with active contracts — \$46.5 million, according to the report.

Israel has since 2023 spent more than \$100 million on direct influence activities in the U.S. that have to be registered with the DOJ, according to the Quincy Institute.

What are Iowa candidates' positions regarding Israel?

Reuters reported in September ahead of the introduction of sanctions legislation by U.S. Senate Democrats against individuals or groups that facilitate an Israeli settlement plan for the West Bank that there is growing friction between Congressional Democrats and the Israeli government.

The tensions are over issues including Israel's treatment of the West Bank — where Israeli settlers have been attacking Palestinians — and Israel's conduct during its war in Gaza launched after the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023 terrorist attacks against Israel.

President Donald Trump's administration on Oct. 9, 2026, issued further financial sanctions against the International Criminal Court, or ICC, after previously targeting the court over its decision to issue an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over alleged Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

From 1946 to 2024, Israel — which was founded in 1948 — has received the most cumulative U.S. economic and military aid of any nation, and also been one of the top recipients of U.S. arms sales, according to the Council on Foreign Relations.

In November's race for U.S. Senate in Iowa, Republican U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson faces Democrat Josh Turek. Both candidates' platforms on their campaign websites are focused first on affordability issues, and neither specifically mentioned Israel.

Hinson has long been a supporter of a U.S. relationship with Israel based on "shared values, security interests, and religious ideals," as she described in a September 2023 tweet and March 2022 column in the Telegraph Herald.

She voted in June 2024 for a House resolution that condemned the ICC's arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant, would have cut off U.S.

funding for the ICC and that would have imposed sanctions against foreign people and entities assisting the court in its prosecution.

The progressive digital news outlet Iowa Starting Line published a video in April 2026 in which Turek condemned Hamas and the terrorist group's Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on Israel. "Israel is one of the few functioning democracies in the Mid-East," he said.

But Turek also spoke against "unnecessary killing of civilians and children" and said taxpayer money should not go to regimes that do not abide by international law.

In Iowa's 3rd Congressional District race, incumbent GOP Rep. Zach Nunn faces Democratic state Sen. Sarah Trone Garriott. Nunn and Trone Garriott's campaign platforms also do not mention Israel.

The Register could not immediately find an instance of Trone Garriott publicly discussing a position on support for Israel. And her campaign on Oct. 12 did not respond to request for comment.

Nunn has been a longtime advocate for a strong U.S.-Israeli strategic partnership. According to a blog post from his office in October 2024: "The U.S. must continue to be unwavering in our commitment to Israel and stand righteously against the Iranian regime of terror. We cannot abandon our strongest ally in the Middle East."

Nunn also in June 2024 voted for the same House resolution condemning the ICC that Hinson did.

Reuters and USA Today contributed to this report.

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