



Stephen Zykovsky

Lynn's Zykovsky wears the mantle of a proud Jewish Republican

BY STEVE MARANTZ([HTTPS://JEWISHJOURNAL.ORG/AUTHOR/STEVE-MARANTZ/](https://JewishJournal.org/author/Steve-Marantz/)).

February 16, 2023



If Massachusetts Republicans are an endangered species, Jewish Massachusetts Republicans may be the next woolly mammoth. Of the 80 members of the Republican State Committee, four are Jewish.

That's the estimate of Stephen Zykovsky, a Jew who is the dean of the Republican State Committee, elected as a member almost continually since 1982. A lifelong Lynn resident, Zykovsky, 75, represents the Third Essex District, which includes Lynn, Lynnfield, Marblehead, Nahant, Saugus, and Swampscott.

Zykovsky said being Jewish poses no conflict with being a Republican. A conservative Republican, to be precise.

"When you have a Jewish education, and learn what we learn from the Old Testament, it tells us how to live a good life and how to treat people," said Zykovsky.

"My Jewish education, I never found antithetical to my political beliefs.

"I don't put politics and religion together, by the way. There are so many religions, and people believe in so many things, and some don't believe in anything. All these beliefs or lack thereof, have to be respected."

But Zykovsky acknowledged that Jews in New England tend to vote overwhelmingly Democratic.

"My theory?" he said. "To quote Tevye in 'Fiddler,' one word: 'tradition.'

“Unfortunately, a lot of people don’t view politics as being important, so they don’t give it much thought. ‘Well, if mother and father are Democrats, then I must be.’ Everybody doesn’t sit down and think, ‘What shall I do, what shall I be? What does the Democratic Party stand for? What does the Republican Party stand for?’ Most people don’t think like that.”

Raised in a blue-collar Democratic household, the grandson of Eastern European immigrants, and bar mitzvahed at the long-closed Anshai Sfard synagogue, Zykofsky found his political calling at Lynn Classical High. A friend persuaded him to join the Teenage Republican Club. Then he watched Jack Parr interview Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater on television, before Goldwater became the 1964 Republican presidential nominee.

“I listened to what Senator Goldwater had to say and didn’t disagree with any of it,” Zykofsky recalled.

Asked what appealed to him, Zykofsky said, “In general, the Republican Party stands for a strong United States, strong security, a strong position in the world, free enterprise, and our capitalist system. Which I firmly believe in.” Citing Thomas Jefferson, Zykofsky said small government is the best government.

As he plies his trade as an investment counselor, Zykofsky knows his beloved state party is a devalued asset. After the November election, Republicans held just three of 40 Senate seats, and 26 of 160 House seats on Beacon Hill. Not a single Republican won a contested statewide race, nor a Congressional seat.

In Lynn, of 53,415 registered voters in 2020, only 6 percent were Republicans, while 42 percent were Democrats, and more than half were unenrolled.

Meanwhile, the state party is in the throes of bitter infighting. A longtime state committee member, Amy Carnevale, of Marblehead, recently deposed Jim Lyons as state party chair, by a 37-34 vote, after decrying election defeats, weak fund-raising, and decline of registered Republicans. Carnevale advised Donald Trump's 2016 campaign in Massachusetts, and also helped raise money for former Gov. Charlie Baker.

Zykofsky said he shares a cordial relationship with Carnevale even as he acknowledged the party's challenge to become relevant again in the Bay State.

"You keep trying to elect more Republicans, who could certainly, in my opinion, run the state better than Democrats have done," Zykofsky said. "You just keep working, talking to people, making your positions known. If any party is going to get anywhere, you start at the local level. You run people for school committee, city council, select board, all those lower offices people don't want to deal with. You start somewhere and get yourself known."

"We have a lot of good men and women who think the way most Republicans think, but a lot of Republicans don't want to get involved and that makes it difficult. It's not that important to them, they're more worried about their families and careers. And if you're going to be successful in politics, you have to dedicate an awful lot of time to it."

"Regretfully, a lot of people are involved in Democratic politics, and to Democrats politics is a blood sport."

Zykofsky's grassroots work is appreciated here and beyond, Massachusetts Republican State Committee National Committeeman Ron Kaufman told the Lynn Journal in 2020. "I have known Steve for a long time and while he sometimes ruffles feathers, the first thing to know about him is, when he tells you something you can take it to the bank."

Zykofsky pulls no punches in deriding Baker as a "Republican in name only." Nor is he timid about defending Trump. To wit, the 2020 election was not stolen but was "interfered with," the Jan. 6 insurrection was not Trump's fault, nor is the rise of antisemitism and violence against Jews.

"For crying out loud, Trump has Jewish grandchildren," Zykofsky said. "What, he's going to be antisemitic with Jewish grandchildren? And he's very close to them. So it doesn't make much sense, and can you name a president more supportive of Israel?"

Antisemitism ebbs and flows, Zykofsky said, because people need a scapegoat for problems and "Jews are always a good target." He's thankful that hasn't been the case with Republican voters in his district.

"I obviously have a Jewish name, everybody knows I'm Jewish," said Zykofsky. "I've run for reelection every four years and I only lost once, and it was close. I think that says a lot about Republicans in this district. They vote for me despite the fact – and this is a bad way of putting it – that I'm Jewish. I don't have that problem."

–

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment *

Name *

Email *

TOP STORIES

A Jewish producer of ‘All Quiet On The Western Front’ sees his family history in the Oscar-nominated Netflix film (<https://jewishjournal.org/2023/03/07/a-jewish-producer-of-all-quiet-on-the-western-front-sees-his-family-history-in-the-oscar-nominated-netflix-film/>)

BY ANDREW LAPIN

Kyiv Jews celebrate their 2nd wartime Purim with renewed resolve and optimism (<https://jewishjournal.org/2023/05/07/kyiv-jews-celebrate-their-2nd-wartime-purim-with-renewed-resolve-and-optimism/>)

BY MARCEL GASCÓN BARBERÁ

The real Jewish history in ‘History of the World: Part II’: Part I (<https://jewishjournal.org/2023/03/07/the-real-jewish-history-in-history-of-the-world-part-ii-part-i/>)

BY ANDREW LAPIN

Sarajevo Jews celebrate a second Purim. For centuries, they weren’t alone. (<https://jewishjournal.org/2023/03/07/sarajevo-jews-celebrate-a-second-purim-for-centuries-they-werent-alone/>)

BY DAVID I. KLEIN

The Purim story starts in fear and ends in vengeance. Can America and Israel break that cycle? (<https://jewishjournal.org/2023/03/07/the-purim-story-starts-in-fear-and-ends-in-vengeance-can-america-and-israel-break-that-cycle/>)

BY ANDREA HODOS

Jewish Journal is reader supported

DONATE
([HTTPS://WWW.PAYPAL.COM/CGI-BIN/WEBSCR?CMD=_S-XCLICK&HOSTED_BUTTON_ID=Z5VSKBEUW2PQ6&SOURCE=URL](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_S-XCLICK&HOSTED_BUTTON_ID=Z5VSKBEUW2PQ6&SOURCE=URL))

SUBSCRIBE
([HTTPS://JEWISHJOURNAL.ORG/SUBSCRIBE/](https://jewishjournal.org/subscribe/))

(<https://jewishjournal.org>)

About Us

Contact Us

Advertise With Us

Archived Issues

Privacy Policy

(<https://www.jewishjournal.org>)
ps:/ ps:/
ww. ww.
inst
agr
am.
com
/je
wis
hjo
urn
alm
a/)



