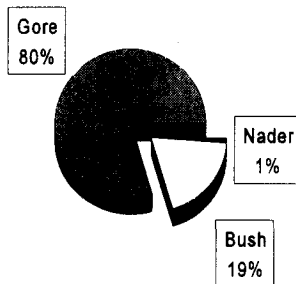


The Jewish vote



TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Number of Jews in House rises

Since Sen. Joseph Lieberman's vice presidential race remains unclear, so, too, does the Jewish makeup of the U.S. Senate. There will be at least nine Jews serving in the Senate. Lieberman won his seat and will serve if he loses the vice presidency. The number of Jews serving in the House of Representatives will rise from 23 to at least 27. [Page 4]

Gunmen kill Israeli woman

Palestinian gunmen killed an Israeli woman who worked as a customs agent when they opened fire on a car at the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.

Three Palestinian teen-agers were also killed during fighting Wednesday in Gaza, and one died in a West Bank clash.

Later in the day, Israel brought in tanks after Palestinian police joined with other protesters in a gun battle with Israeli troops at the Karni Crossing between Israel and Gaza.

Voucher initiatives rejected

Voters rejected statewide school voucher initiatives in Michigan and California.

In Michigan, the initiative would have provided \$3,300 "opportunity scholarships" to students in failing public schools.

The California initiative would have provided a \$4,000 voucher to any school student wishing to attend a private school. Jewish groups have been sharply divided over the voucher issue.

ELECTIONS 2000

The key to the presidency may be held by Florida Jews

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) – In the end, the selection of the next president of the United States came down in many ways to voters in heavily Jewish South Florida.

And in a major twist, the votes that might have mattered most were the ones elderly Jews may have inadvertently cast for Pat Buchanan, the Reform Party candidate known for his anti-Israel and anti-Semitic statements.

Florida's 25 electoral votes hung in the balance throughout the night Tuesday, as both Al Gore and George W. Bush were alternately declared Florida's winner during the night, only to have the state wind up as the ultimate wild card.

With both houses of Congress staying Republican for the next two years, many Jewish activists, who tend to push a more liberal agenda, were looking to the presidential election to give them some allies in the Washington power structure.

The outcome of the congressional races was disappointing to many Jewish groups, who worry that many of the legislative issues they were hoping to advance in the next Congress will have to wait at least another two years. Particularly on domestic issues such as hate crimes legislation and gun control, the Jewish organizational agenda is likely to face the same hurdles it did in the 106th Congress.

In the wee hours of the morning Wednesday, after the Bush campaign had started celebrating and Gore had conceded defeat in a phone call to the Texas governor — a call he later retracted — it looked like the GOP had accomplished a trifecta, control of both houses of Congress and the executive branch. But state officials ordered, as required by law, a recount of the presidential race in Florida, after seeing it was being called by a margin of less than a half of one percent of the votes. Results of the outcome were not expected before Thursday.

At the center of it all were ballots in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, which have a large Jewish population.

Although Jews made up only 5 percent of Florida's vote, a large bulk of the constituency was from that area, which includes many senior citizen communities.

"Those numbers we knew were very heavily Democratic," said media consultant Matthew Dorf, who spent election night at Gore headquarters in Nashville. "They happen to also be the Jewish districts."

Also needing to be counted were overseas absentee ballots, which will include Florida voters traveling abroad and those who live in Israel, as well as members of the military. What could prove pivotal — and portends a legal battle — is a group of ballots that may have been inadvertently cast for Buchanan.

U.S. Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.) told CNN that voters in Palm Beach County, a heavily Jewish area, were leaving the polling place crying because they had voted for Buchanan by accident. Some voters were apparently confused because of the way the ballot was structured.

Ballots showed candidates on both sides of the ballot, in every-other-page order. So while Bush/Cheney was immediately followed by Gore/Lieberman on the left page, interjected between them was Buchanan. "There is no doubt that there was much confusion at Palm Beach County yesterday at the ballot box," Wexler told CNN.

He said Buchanan received 3,000 votes in the county, compared to an average of 400 in other districts. It is unclear whether those votes were all Jews, or how many of those voters actually intended to vote for Gore, but with just hundreds of votes dividing

MIDEAST FOCUS

U.N. considers peacekeepers

The 15-member U.N. Security Council took up Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's request for international peacekeepers to monitor the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

However, Israeli diplomatic sources said several council members agree with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan that peacekeepers could not be dispatched without Israel's approval.

Arafat was expected to make a direct appeal to the council on Friday.

Israeli envoys said they would ask for equal time to make their case before the council.

Barak offers statehood

In a letter to world leaders, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made an explicit offer to help create a "viable" Palestinian state.

But, the Israeli prime minister added Wednesday, the state would be created as a result of peaceful negotiations, not through violence or a unilateral declaration.

Panel to eye Israeli Arab deaths

Israel is creating a national commission to investigate the killing of 13 Israeli Arabs by police at the beginning of the Palestinian uprising some six weeks ago.

The chief justice of the nation's Supreme Court will appoint commission members.

Palestinians angry at U.N. official

The Palestinian Authority said the U.N. high commissioner for human rights is not welcome to visit the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Palestinian officials said Wednesday they were "surprised" by Mary Robinson's desire to meet with Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon, the hawkish head of the Likud Party, during her visit to the region this week.

the candidates, they could be significant. Wexler said he was unsure how the mistake could be resolved.

Voters who feel they selected the wrong candidate started deluging the local board of elections Tuesday afternoon, said Jeff Klein, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County.

Klein said he himself used the paper ballot in question, and said it was easy to punch the hole for the wrong candidate. "If you didn't pay close attention, you could have easily" voted for Buchanan, Klein said, who added that Palm Beach County is the most Jewish county in the United States.

The irony of Buchanan siphoning off Gore votes did not escape Tammy Jacobson, who works at the Kaplan Jewish Community Center in West Palm Beach.

"I'm doubting myself," she said Wednesday morning at a staff meeting that turned into a discussion about Jewish voters concerned about their vote.

"And what about the seniors? Some people said, 'If you have questions, you should have asked.' Well, I waited 25 minutes in line, and the people were sitting behind the desk taking your name — you didn't feel there was anyone to ask. And if the seniors could get themselves to the polling station, do you think after that, they're really going to grab someone and say, 'Excuse me, I don't understand?' No!"

In addition, the sample ballot that was sent in the mail was laid out differently from the actual ballot. It is feared that the confusion may have spread beyond the elderly. Rushed parents taking kids to school, third-shift workers and others on tight morning or lunchtime schedules might have missed their intended candidate.

The effect is obvious to Lisa Stoch, another JCC employee who passed around a petition at the center calling for a revote.

"Buchanan didn't even get 20,000 in the whole state of Florida, and he got 3,400 in Palm Beach County — something's not right," she said. "What percentage of that 3,400 were people that thought they were voting for Gore?"

Stoch rallied a meeting of Holocaust survivors early Wednesday, triumphantly announcing that "all of them have agreed to sign" the petition.

Meanwhile, concern surfaced Wednesday that a ballot box in heavily Jewish Fort Lauderdale had not been counted, adding to the confusion.

The significance of the Jewish vote in the state counters the prevailing logic before Election Day. With an assumption that the majority of Jews would be voting Democratic, as they traditionally do, both candidates were courting the Arab vote, seeing it as key to winning Michigan and the White House.

In the end, Gore won Michigan handily Tuesday. The breakdown of the Arab vote was not immediately available.

Lieberman had visited the Sunshine State so often, he had joked he felt like he was running for local elections. Nader received 96,000 votes in Florida.

Jews made up 4 percent of the voting bloc nationwide.

Many of the issues of concern to Jews will ultimately be decided by who controls the White House. The next president will inherit a troubled Middle East that could require new thinking after the collapse of the yearslong peace process.

In addition, the next president may select as many as three Supreme Court justices over the next few years. Those justices could decide key cases regarding abortion rights, school vouchers, gay rights and issues relating to separation of church and state.

But Jewish activists are also concerned that Republican control of the White House and both houses of Congress could place their agenda at the bottom of the priority pile.

With the Senate leaning toward an even split between Democrats and Republicans on Wednesday morning, the result would be affected by the outcome of the presidential race. And the GOP held an advantage in both scenarios. A Bush victory would mean incoming Vice President Dick Cheney would hold the tie-breaking vote.

And if the Democrats win the White House, Joseph Lieberman would leave the Senate for the vice presidency, leaving the Republican governor of Connecticut to select a member of his party to replace him, breaking the tie.

For its part, the House of Representatives will remain in the hands of Republicans as well, by a very slim margin. □

(JTA correspondents Sharon Samber in Washington and Tom Brodigan in Florida contributed to this report.)



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JEWISH WORLD

U.S. lifts freeze on Austria

The United States lifted its freeze on diplomatic contacts with Austria. Wednesday's decision ends a freeze that was imposed in February when members of the far-right Freedom Party joined the Austrian government.

ADL blasts blood libel report

The Anti-Defamation League called on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to publicly condemn the "most recent" instance of anti-Semitic incitement in the Egyptian press.

The ADL said it was "outraged" by a column in the Oct. 28 edition of Egypt's leading daily, *Al-Ahram*, in which Israel was accused of using the blood of Palestinian children. The article "uses the current Mideast crisis to resurrect the infamous anti-Jewish canard of blood libel," the ADL said.

German party may face ban

The German government plans to ask the nation's highest court to ban the extreme-right National Democratic Party.

Wednesday's decision came on the eve of a mass march against intolerance in Berlin that will mark multiple anniversaries, including Hitler's first bid for power; the fall of the Berlin Wall; and Kristallnacht, the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938, when Nazi thugs ransacked Jewish-owned shops and set synagogues ablaze across Germany and Austria.

B'nai B'rith honors WWII soldier

B'nai B'rith's Raoul Wallenberg Lodge in Berlin recently honored a U.S. Army veteran and former Massachusetts education secretary despite questions over whether he actually helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp.

Paul Parks, 77, has insisted he took part in the 1945 liberation and is featured in the Oscar-winning documentary "The Last Days." Parks is black and U.S. military historians insist that no blacks were present at the April 29, 1945, liberation. However, the group's president said it had "no concrete information" to dispute Parks' claim.

College offers day school degree

A Chicago organization promoting Jewish day schools is partnering with a Catholic university to offer a joint master's of education and administration degree and day school principal certification.

The program, run by the Jewish Education Leadership Institute and Loyola University in Chicago, will start next fall.

It comes at a time when day schools throughout North America face a severe shortage of qualified principals and teachers.

ELECTIONS 2000

At Hillary fete, Jewish supporters cheer their win

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — Not surprisingly, the raucous Hillary2000 celebration in New York was teeming with Jewish supporters.

What was surprising, though, is that Hillary Clinton fared much worse with the all-important Jewish voting bloc — it reportedly constituted 14 percent of the New York electorate — than what the conventional wisdom suggested was necessary for a Democrat to win.

Three different polls said the Jewish state was 58-41, 56-43 and 53-45 in Clinton's favor, but some pundits and pollsters said she would need to win at least two-thirds.

Nevertheless, Clinton coasted to a landmark victory over her Republican opponent, Rick Lazio, by 56 to 44 percent. In perhaps the most closely watched Senate race in the country, Clinton became the first first lady ever elected to public office.

A media crush of more than 500 was on hand at the tony Grand Hyatt Hotel in Manhattan, and thousands and thousands of campaign staffers, local movers-and-shakers and ordinary backers flowed throughout the hotel to celebrate.

In the grand ballroom where Clinton would later give her victory speech, sharing the dais with the president and their daughter, Chelsea, the crowd was packed so tight, the Fire Marshal sealed off the room to further admittance.

Hundreds strained to get through the metal detectors and catch at least a glimpse.

While her victory was declared early, later in the evening, the festive mood was tempered and even punctured by the struggle of the Gore-Lieberman ticket.

Meanwhile, on the matter of Clinton and "the Jewish vote," a canvassing of the crowd found Jewish opinion plentiful and varied. Clinton is either loved or hated by voters, a polarization reflected among Jews as well.

While many share her liberal values, some Jews view her as pro-Palestinian, or resented her "carpetbagging," or are angered by her stance against school vouchers — an issue popular among Orthodox Jews.

Among the Orthodox, who often tend to be more politically conservative, Clinton had her share of backers, including among the fervently Orthodox. At the madhouse celebration Tuesday night, there was a smattering of black hats and peyos.

"Bill Clinton never hated Jews, so I was never concerned that Hillary might hate Jews," said Rabbi Leib Glanz, a Satmar Chasid from Brooklyn.

While Lazio's support for school vouchers galvanized many in the Orthodox community, Glanz said the people he knew who voted for Lazio did so "not because they knew of him before, or believed in him, but because they wanted to vote for someone from New York."

On the other hand, at least one Jewish observer said Clinton's outsider status likely helped her.

"Specifically because she was an outsider, she either understood or was compelled to listen very carefully to New Yorkers," Irwin Kula, president of CLAL — the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, said Wednesday morning.

"It would have been very easy for her to concentrate on New York City, but she went out of her way, almost, to go upstate and sit and listen to people.

"She was able to project a sense of inclusiveness."

Back at Tuesday's shindig, a middle-aged Clinton supporter, Lucile Kleiman, offered her perspective on some of the hostility toward the candidate, from both Jews and non-Jews.

"Feminists felt she should have left her husband" after the Monica Lewinsky imbroglio, Kleiman said, "while sexists thought she should stand by her man, do her wifely duties and not be too ambitious" by running for public office. Kleiman, however, described herself as "delighted" and "relieved" by Clinton's electoral success.

"I've always thought she would fight fairly and squarely for anybody, not just Jews. When she'll be in the Senate, I know that when she raises her hand, she'll be raising it for issues that are best for this nation." □

ELECTIONS 2000**Jews gain seats in Congress, as new faces offset some losses***By Sharon Samber*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — One influential Jewish representative was defeated, one venerated Jewish senator retired and the number of Jewish Republicans may have tripled as a result of this week's elections.

Overall, the Jewish presence in Congress will increase, with several new faces in the House of Representatives.

The 107th Congress will have at least 27 Jewish representatives and at least nine senators. The 106th Congress had 23 Jewish representatives and 11 senators.

Two House races in which Jewish challengers were attempting to unseat incumbents, were still too close to call Wednesday morning, as the nation waited to see whether Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) would become the first-ever Jewish vice president.

If Lieberman does not make it to the White House, he will return to the Senate, ensuring a Jewish "minyan" in the upper chamber. But a Democratic Jewish colleague from Lieberman's home state, Rep. Sam Gejdenson, will not be returning to Congress. Gejdenson lost his House seat and the important standing as the ranking minority member of the House International Relations Committee when he was defeated Tuesday by Rob Simmons.

Gejdenson has long been viewed as a friend to the Jewish community and particularly strong on Israel issues.

Jews are losing another longtime friend on Capitol Hill with the retirement of Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) after 18 years. His successor, Democrat Jon Corzine, who poured millions of his own dollars into the campaign, can thank the majority of the state's 600,000 Jews who helped vote him into office.

Two other Jewish senators up for re-election — Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Herb Kohl (D-Wisc.) — both won.

Republican Jewish numbers in the House, meanwhile, may increase from one to two or three, depending on whether Republican Dick Zimmer succeeds in unseating incumbent Democrat Rush Holt and regaining the seat Zimmer once held. Zimmer was originally declared the winner in New Jersey's 12th District, but by 5 p.m. Wednesday, the race was still too close to call.

The new Jewish Republican in the House is Eric Cantor (R-Va.). Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) was re-elected.

New Democratic Jewish members of the House are Susan Davis and Adam Schiff of California, as well as Steve Israel of New York, who was the regional director for American Jewish Congress on Long Island in the 1980s.

Jane Harman (D-Calif.) returns to the House seat she once held after defeating Republican incumbent Steven Kuykendall.

Another race, in Florida's 22nd District, was still too close to call Wednesday afternoon. There 20-year incumbent Republican Clay Shaw was trying to stave off a challenge from Elaine Bloom, a Jewish Democrat. The bitter campaign had both candidates hurling accusations at each other and vying for the votes of the more than 100,000 Jews in the South Florida district.

The district is 40 to 45 percent Jewish, and both Bloom and Shaw have strong relationships with the community, said Luis Fleischman, director of the Jewish community relations council in Palm Beach County.

Some races were watched closely because the Jewish vote could have made a difference, while others highlighted a particular candidate's positions that either appealed to or offended Jewish sensibilities. Among the results from key Senate races:

- In New York, Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton defeated Republican Rick Lazio. After a grueling campaign, the first lady rode to victory by an estimated 56 percent to 44 percent. But Jews, who made up 14 percent of overall voters, were deeply split.

Estimates were that anywhere between 53 percent and 58 percent of Jews voted for Clinton amid lingering concern over her controversial kiss last year of Suha Arafat, the wife of the Palestinian Authority president, and her support of a Palestinian state. But Lazio may have tried too hard with his charges that Clinton had ties to Muslim groups advocating terrorism.

- In Nevada, Republican John Ensign defeated Jewish Democrat Ed Bernstein. A well-known trial attorney, Bernstein had been down more than 30 points and then pulled within four points of his opponent, but it was not enough. Nevada is a conservative state, and Bernstein's liberal message did not play well, as he lost 56 to 40 percent.

- In New Jersey, Corzine decisively beat Republican Bob Franks. For many Jews, the idea of anyone replacing Lautenberg, who was venerated by the Jewish community, will be tough. But Corzine spent \$60 million on the campaign and reached out to a significant portion of the state's 600,000 plus Jews. In the end, 72 percent of Jewish voters backed him.

- In Michigan, Democrat Debbie Stabenow defeated Republican incumbent Sen. Spencer Abraham. In a very close race only declared Wednesday morning, Stabenow finally dealt Abraham, the only Arab American senator, a defeat.

The much-touted Arab-American voting bloc may not have come out strong enough for Abraham. Michigan has more than 100,000 Jews and over 300,000 Arab Americans.

Among the House races involving Jewish candidates:

- In Illinois' 10th District, Lauren Beth Gash, a Jewish Democrat, lost to Mark Kirk, a Republican. It was a close race for the open seat vacated by retiring Republican Rep. John Porter, who was well regarded by the 50,000-strong Jewish community on Chicago's North Shore.

- In Virginia's 7th District, Republican Eric Cantor defeated Democrat Warren A. Stewart by a wide margin. Cantor, a Jewish real estate executive, was heavily favored to win the seat of retiring, 10-term Republican Rep. Thomas J. Bliley Jr.

- In Colorado's 6th District, Ken Toltz, a Jewish Democrat, did not manage to unseat Republican incumbent Tom Tancredo. Tancredo beat the Jewish businessman 54 to 43 percent, as Tancredo's conservatism appeared not to give him problems.

- In New Jersey's 3rd District, Democrat Susan Bass Levin gave Republican Jim Saxton a good run, but Saxton ended up winning by 58 to 42 percent. Saxton, a 16-year incumbent, beat Levin, the popular Jewish mayor of Cherry Hill, despite her work to get support of the area's 30,000 Jews. Levin apparently did not boost her name recognition enough outside her home city.

- In California's 27th District, Democrat Adam Schiff won a decisive victory over Republican incumbent Jim Rogan, after the candidates waged what was one of the most expensive House campaigns in history. Over \$9 million later, Schiff beat out Rogan, one of the House managers during at the Clinton impeachment trial, by 54 to 43 percent. □