



Support Your Jewish Republican

They may become less rare if David Storobin has anything to say about it.

By [ROSS KAMINSKY](#) on 2.17.12 @ 6:10AM

You remember *Family Feud*, don't you? Richard Dawson asks family member contestants a question that was also asked of 100 people and the contestants have to guess what the survey answers were.

So if you'll allow me to play Richard Dawson for a moment, here's the question for you, dear contestant:

"One hundred people surveyed. Top answers on the board. Name an elected Jewish Republican."

If you said, "This is a trick question; they don't exist," congratulations, you got the most popular answer, with 54 percent on my hypothetical survey. The second most common answer, at 23 percent, was Virginia Congressman Eric Cantor, followed by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg (who, as a man of deep principle,

was a Republican from 2001 to 2009 after being a Democrat for many years and is now an Independent) with 18 percent and "Is Joe Lieberman a Republican?" with 5 percent.

In other words, there is only one nationally known elected Republican Jew -- Eric Cantor -- and even he, despite being the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, isn't well known as a Congressman -- much less as the only Republican Jew in Congress -- outside of his home state of Virginia. Cantor is the only Jew among the 39 Jewish members of Congress (House and Senate combined) despite the share of Jews voting Republican averaging over 20 percent for the last decade.

Jewish pundits on the right (a less rare breed than you might think) such as Norman Podhoretz, Robert Goldberg, and even yours truly, have analyzed and lamented the persistence of the Jewish tendency to lean politically left and vote Democratic. Some say, and it's hard to disagree, that the first religion for most American Jews is liberalism.

And while pontificating, if you'll pardon the Catholic term, about Jewish Republicans is fun, it doesn't actually do much to help turn the tide of stubborn Jewish fealty to the party of Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama, which is to say the party of institutionalized American anti-Semitism. What would help, however, is for voters -- and not just Jewish voters -- to have more Jewish Republican officeholders at any level to point to as role models and inspiration.

One such role model may be David Storobin, a Jewish Republican who is running for the New York State Senate representing the Senate's 27th District, in the Brighton Beach area of Brooklyn. The special election will be held on March 20. Storobin, who I met several years ago at a Cato Institute event, will be running for an open seat after the incumbent, Democrat Carl Kruger, pled guilty to corruption and taking bribes. He'll be taking on Lew Fidler, described in the *Wall Street Journal* as "a veteran and well-financed City Councilman from south Brooklyn."

The campaign is, not surprisingly, getting a little ugly with Fidler making perhaps an electorally fatal mistake of saying that the Jewish Storobin has "ties to skinheads, neo-Nazis and white supremacists." Standing in front of a banner proclaiming that "character counts," Storobin responded by saying that "Mr. Fidler's character makes him unfit to serve in the New York State Senate," adding that Fidler is "the kind of person who would say or do anything to get elected." Fidler later said that he meant "links" to skinheads and neo-Nazis because, according to the *New York Times*, "a local blogger known as Gatemouth (who said that he donated to Mr. Fidler's campaign) had discovered that some Web sites with neo-Nazi and white supremacist ties had *linked* to Mr. Storobin's articles." Storobin rightly pointed out that he is not responsible for who links to his articles, calling Fidler's rhetoric "shameful."

David's Storobin's story is that of a man chasing the American Dream, having arrived in the U.S. from Russia at the age of 12, learning the lessons of hard work and opportunity, earning a law degree, founding an international affairs analysis website, and starting his own law firm at the ripe old age of 25: "Since I had only meager savings at this young age, I had to max out my all of my credit cards, the only time in my life when I did not pay them off in full. I started by working out of my friend's office, then got a virtual office, then a tiny one-room office. Today, I have two real offices with full-time associates and paralegals working for me."

Being young, smart, and energetic -- while better than the opposite -- certainly doesn't guarantee electoral success. But Storobin has a lot more going for him. Former Borough President of Staten Island, Congressman and Republican big-hitter in New York, Guy Molinari, will serve as co-chairman of Storobin's State Senate campaign. Other well-known local supporters include Congressman Mike Grimm, Congressman Bob Turner (about whom more in a moment), and NY State Senator Marty Golden. Given David Storobin's prior support of, including volunteering for, former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani's mayoral and presidential

bids, it would not be surprising to see "America's Mayor" throw some valuable support Storobin's way though it hasn't happened yet. Storobin has also received the endorsement of the local Conservative Party organization.

One might think Storobin at a substantial disadvantage in the very Democratic Brooklyn: the New York Senate Democrats' web pagesays that "Democrats maintain an overwhelming voter registration advantage in the district." According to Storobin, "It's 3:1 Democrat, but anyone who knows anything about southern Brooklyn knows it's irrelevant. It's because people registered many years ago and didn't re-register. The new registrations are leaning Republican, which is why in my district, it went from almost 5:1 to 3:1."

The district substantially overlaps the now infamous NY-9 Congressional District, until recently held by Anthony "The Bulge" Weiner. In the race to replace Weiner, Republican Bob Turner beat Democrat David Weprin in a stunning 54 percent to 46 percent result, making Turner the first Republican in 91 years to hold that seat. In the part of State Senate District 27 that overlaps NY-9, Turner won 66 percent of the vote.

And that came despite the loser Weprin's being an Orthodox Jew versus Turner's Catholic faith, running in the "most Jewish" congressional district in the nation with estimates averaging about 1/3 of the Congressional district's population being Jewish. Brooklyn's *Jewish Voice* magazine endorsed the Catholic Turner, further showing that Jews don't just "vote for the Jewish guy" in the same way that, for example, blacks came out in historic numbers and percentages for Barack Obama. Still, it's closer to that sort of behavior among most Jews than it should be. If many modern Jews' first religion is liberalism, their voting record show it: Jews have averaged about 78 percent support for the Democratic candidate in presidential races going back to 1992. No Republican candidate other than Dwight Eisenhower (in his 1956 re-election) has reached 40 percent of the Jewish vote since Warren Harding in 1920.

Polls suggest that Jewish support for Republicans was 30 percent in the 2010 elections, still a disappointing number but a substantial increase from just two years earlier and a move which, if maintained, could pose problems for Democrats in swing states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Florida.

In response to questions for this article, Storobin offered some insight into the Orthodox Russian Jewish community he seeks to represent:

Orthodox Jews, being deeply religious, are very socially conservative, which stands in stark contrast to the secular American Jewish community. Meanwhile, Russian Jews reject all talk of income redistribution from liberals because it is something they saw in its full form in the Soviet Union, and they saw the disastrous results of it.

Interestingly enough, the media ignores this segment of the Jewish population. When they say that 78% of Jews voted for Obama, they ignore these two groups that voted 80%+ for McCain. But these are the two groups of Jews who are growing, while Secular American Jews are collapsing in number every generation. Imagine if Jewish communities in New York City and elsewhere actually had well-spoken conservative Jews to vote for, during this age of frustration with -- or outright disdain for -- an American president who at every turn suggests a preference for the Muslim world over our nation's only true ally in the Middle East. Perhaps resistance to the Democrats' Borg-like hold on the political souls of American Jews need not be futile after all.

David Storobin's candidacy represents an opportunity, especially in a city and state with a large Jewish population, to show Jewish voters and potential Jewish candidates that Republican Jewish politicians do not only exist in the daydreams of pundits and the nightmares of Chuck Schumer.

Maybe in a future *Family Feud* episode, at least a few people will be able to name one more elected Jewish Republican.

(In an unusual footnote to this election, there is a possibility that the district will be redistricted out of existence by a proposed *Republican* New York Senate

redistricting map that would otherwise reduce Democrats' political power in Brooklyn. Democrats are crying foul and predicting that "it's unlikely the proposed lines will be adopted." The possibility of the district's disappearance could limit spending on the race by both party organizations, but David Storobin campaigns on, undeterred.)