Vance Lost the Midterms and Found a Scapegoat: Israel

THE LIE

Vice President JD Vance says Republicans lost the 2026 midterms because of the war with Iran, and that the Trump voters who switched to the Democrats will only come back if America will "change our relationship to Israel." "The reason we lost is the war."

THE TRUTH

Israel didn't cost Republicans the midterms. The exit polls show voters were angry about high gas and grocery prices, not Israel, and Vance's claim about Israel rests on a single pollster he didn't name.

BACKGROUND

➔ On November 4, 2026, the day after Democrats won control of both the House and the Senate, Vance posted on X that "the reason we lost is the war." He wrote that a pollster asked Trump voters who defected what would bring them back, and listed the top four answers, which he said accounted for nearly all responses: end the war, focus on cost of living, put America First, and change the relationship with Israel. Jerusalem Post

➔ Vance is considered a likely 2028 presidential contender and was widely reported to have opposed the Iran war before it began.

➔ President Trump responded the same day. He called Vance's assessment "largely true" because the war raised gas prices, but said he "would've done nothing different."

➔ Donald Trump Jr. reposted Vance's statement with the comment "Every word of this is 100% 100% 100%." Israel National News ran the story under the headline "JD Vance blames Israel for midterm losses."

TRUTH EXPLAINED

➔ **Voters told exit pollsters the election was about the economy.** In the NBC News Exit Poll, the economy was the top issue for 39% of voters, and 87% said they were concerned about the cost of gas and diesel, 88% about groceries and 86% about utilities. The Fox News Voter Poll found the same thing: the economy came first at 39%, followed by the state of democracy at 32%, immigration at 14% and health care at 8%, with Israel nowhere on the list. Daily Caller

➔ **The pain voters felt came from the gas pump.** A Deseret News/Hinckley Institute survey conducted by Morning Consult, published five weeks before the election, found that 55% of voters nationwide called inflation an "extremely important" issue for their vote. Gas prices jumped more than 40% after the war began, as tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz slowed to a trickle, pushing the national average to $4.47 a gallon, the highest since 2022. KSL

➔ **The decision to fight Iran belongs to the President, and he stands by it.** Israel joined the United States in launching the war against Iran on February 28, but it has largely stayed out of the strikes on Iran since April. President Trump told reporters on November 4 that "the war will end whenever I want it to," which makes clear who is running it. Times of Israel

➔ **Vance's Israel claim rests on one private conversation with a pollster he didn't name.** Israel came fourth on the pollster's list, Vance gave no numbers for any of the four answers, and he didn't say what change those voters want in the relationship. One unnamed source with no data is not evidence that Israel cost Republicans the Senate. Israel National News

➔ **Vance's push to put distance between America and Israel started long before Election Day.** In June he publicly criticized members of Israel's government for opposing President Trump's efforts to end the Iran war. In July he told Joe Rogan that people inside Israel's system were "manipulating and trying to change American public opinion." In October he declined to endorse Netanyahu and said U.S. policy can't be "subservient" to Israel. The midterm loss didn't change Vance's view of Israel. It gave him a new excuse to repeat it. Times of Israel

➔ **Republican voters still strongly back Israel.** An Echelon Insights poll for the Washington Free Beacon, taken June 5-9, 2026, among 1,121 likely Republican primary voters, found that 68% want the United States to "completely" or "mostly" support Israel as an ally. A majority also said they are less likely to vote for candidates with anti-Israel positions. JNS

QUOTES

"You can't let Iran have a nuclear weapon." - President Donald Trump, November 4, 2026

TAKEAWAY

JD Vance didn't explain the Republican defeat. He used it. Voters said loudly that they were hurting from high prices, and the President who launched the war owns that decision and still defends it. By adding Israel to the list on the word of one unnamed pollster, Vance gave his party someone else to blame, kept the heat off the administration he serves, and positioned himself for a 2028 run. Republicans who want to win back voters should start with the price of gas, not with abandoning America's closest ally in the Middle East.