

Jewish Leaders: Mike Pence Is a Guardian of Jewish Freedom

Responding to “progressive Jewish commentators” who they say have distorted Republican Party vice presidential nominee Mike Pence’s record as governor of Indiana, two Jewish activists wrote about the man they’ve known for several years in an op-ed published Thursday afternoon by the *Times of Israel*.

“In sharp contrast to many of his critics, Pence is a vocal supporter of Israel’s right to defend itself against sworn enemies like Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas,” wrote Drs. Elliot Bartky and Allon Friedman, who are the president and vice president, respectively, of the Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana. “While some of Pence’s opponents support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, which opposes the existence of a Jewish state in any form, he recently signed into Indiana law what Israel’s ambassador to the U.S., Ron Dermer, called ‘the toughest anti-BDS legislation in the nation.’”

Bartky, an associate professor of political science at Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, and Friedman, an associate professor of medicine at the Indiana University School of Medicine, said they have had the privilege of working closely with Pence and other Indiana legislators of both political parties to pass important pro-Jewish, pro-Israel legislation. They asserted in their op-ed that opposition to Pence is less about the GOP vice presidential nominee’s record and more about his critics’ own ideology.

“In fact, there is strong reason to believe that such opposition to Pence is much less a reflection of his positions than an indication of how far many Jewish Americans have strayed over recent years from core Jewish beliefs,” they wrote. “It is ironic that an evangelical Christian politician

who has demonstrated tenacious support for the Jewish state of Israel, who advocates aggressively for religious liberty, and who supports the practice of traditional Jewish values has been so demonized by individuals and groups claiming to represent Judaism. As American Jewry drifts further from its traditional religious moorings, we should expect to see more of such rhetoric.”