



Chele Farley Is The Real Deal For US Senate – But Will She Break Through?

Wendy Long was a terrific candidate who ran against Kirsten Gillibrand for US Senate in 2012. Does anyone remember Wendy Long? Probably not - Gillibrand won by more than 70 percent!

Long didn't even try to make much of a dent in the Orthodox community, but this year's Republican, Chele Farley, has gotten off to a much better start in that regard. Last Wednesday, the Coalition for Jewish Values, which Rabbi Yaakov Menken leads, hosted a meet and greet for Chele Farley. It was held in Young Israel of KGH's auditorium, where at least 100 important dignitaries from the Orthodox communities from all over the city came to hear her speak.

There is no question that Chele is absolutely the choice for anyone who cares about Israel, New York's fiscal health, and indeed, the country's vitality. She has a background in Wall Street, where she was quite successful in finance. Academically, she has two engineering degrees from Stanford University. Gillibrand turned out to be a leftist Democrat who is simpatico with the newly elected Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as far as abolishing ICE and has prevaricated on the legislation to punish those engaging in BDS as well as not signing on to the Taylor Force Act, which would hold back money to the Palestinian Authority so long as they keep rewarding the families of terrorist martyrs with cash.

Chele holds none of these crooked views and would back Israel wholeheartedly, based on how she has spoken on the matter. Coming from a career in finance, she is – as is Trump – a negotiator. She says she would have negotiated with President Trump on the tax deal that his party in Congress passed to get a better deal for well-to-do New Yorkers who have high deductions for property and state income taxes. She also feels that she would have a good relationship with both sides of the aisle, considering that she has experience dealing with Democrats because her husband is one. She could successfully bring home more of the money that we as New Yorkers, a donor state, pay into the federal government – money, she says, that we could desperately use for infrastructure and education facility upgrades.

Here is the problem: Because Chele is such a no-nonsense type of a person, I feel she hasn't yet learned how to schmooze with a crowd. Her talks, from what I have seen on YouTube and last night, are very short. She also doesn't talk that much about herself as a person, which is necessary in politics because people need to bond with the candidate as a person. People have to feel that a candidate fits into their "world," and even into their community. The night she spoke to the Orthodox crowd she spoke for eight minutes out of a two-hour planned event. I don't know if this was her idea or the coordinators of the event. For the Q&A session, one of the coordinators stood at the podium while she sat down, having to answer from her seat! Who thought this was a good idea?

Chele needs to do what Ocasio-Cortez did running against Crowley. She needs to court the Orthodox vote very heavily and make herself "heimish" in their midst. If she learns a few Yiddish and Hebrew words, even better. People have to become excited with her enough to create a buzz that we must go out and vote for her. She needs to do the same with other religious groups as well, be it Catholic, Singh, Buddhist, or Muslim.

Chele must hit the upstate New York area - hard! That's where she'd get her Republican votes and that's where they are hurting economically. Upstate is Trump country. She must engage them with a listening tour the same way Hillary did when she ran for the same Senate seat.

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That's one of the few things that Hillary ever did right! Once Farley will hear what's on their minds she will be able to "feel their pain" and speak with them on a level that people will be able to feel her heart.



Chele Farley with Rabbi Pesach Lerner at the Rabbinic Roundtable event at YIKGH last week

Then they will know that Chele Farley is their "messenger."

Don't get me wrong. Chele already comes across as sincere and having a can-do approach to governing. It also doesn't hurt that she has a very charismatic presence. But all that is not enough if people don't feel and see her as a firebrand as Gillibrand is. In these times, where family life and religious participation in temples and churches are diminished (except in the Jewish Orthodox circles where there is an ascendancy), people are starved for an ideology they can attach to and call their own – hence all the ridiculous marches that liberals organize where they wear and say the most ludicrous things! People on the right are also looking for more meaning and solutions



to life's problems. This is where politics and spirituality intersect.

Donald Trump took the country by storm with his straight talk. He taught us something: that being forceful and aggressive in an age when wrong leadership is leading us astray has to be called out in no uncertain terms. Trump takes it

as social media cliques tend to isolate some and viciously bully others relentlessly to the point that some helpless and desperate youth see no worth to their lives. Academic failure or substantial minority underachievement in school, joining of gangs, and other forms of violence and criminal life bloom when youth have no positive direction in life and can only identify with activity that speaks to their anger and alienation.

Here in New York City, Mayor de Blasio, to his credit, has instituted social/emotional learning programs with regular discussion groups on how students deal with life's adversities. This is a wonderful thing, where children learn great character lessons such as respect for others, compassion, perseverance, and forgiveness. This is something that could be promoted on a statewide scale and even introduced in the Senate on a national scale. Chele could even give credit to de Blasio about this and thereby show liberals that she can accept great ideas no matter where they come from. On the other hand, promoting more charter schools and funding private schools with such programs also are ways to foster the mental and emotional health for our youth that is often lacking in many public schools.

The reality is that Republicans have a great disadvantage in our blue state. But people upstate are hurting for jobs and economic development and the Jewish Orthodox are very afraid of the onslaught of the radical Democrat Party's shift away from Israel, the trend toward socialism (which goes against the industrious and entrepreneurial spirit of the Jewish people), the abandonment of supporting religious institutions (which serve as foundations of proper citizenship for society), open borders (which can bring in elements that are hostile to Jews such as what we see in Europe), and being lax on law and order, which could lead us backward to the way the city, state, and country was for three decades starting from the rioting of the mid-'60s through the crack and crime epidemic of the '90s.

I am rooting strongly for Chele Farley to become our next US Senator from New York, replacing the Bernie Sanders-wannabe Kirsten Gillibrand, but Chele will have to make her own case forcefully and with heart. Statewide there is (as of two years ago) a 53 to 47 percent ratio of Democrats to Republicans. It's a hurdle to overcome – but it can be done!

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