

The Last Word

Jesus Help Me

By Russell Mokhiber

Believe it or not, the United States is still a predominantly (65 percent) Christian nation. And two devout white Christians are running unusual statewide campaigns – both on overtly Christian populist platforms.

Hedge fund manager James Fishback is running as a Republican for Governor in Florida and state legislator James Talarico is running as a Democrat for U.S. Senate from Texas. Remarkably, they are both running against pro-Israel African-Americans in the primaries.

Talarico has the better chance of winning his U.S. Senate race – polling neck and neck with Democratic Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett in the March 3 primary – and polling neck and neck against either Republican incumbent John Cornyn and Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton in the general election in November.

Talarico says that “the biggest divide in this country is not left vs. right, it’s top vs. bottom – billionaires want us looking left and right at each other instead of looking up at them.”

“The people at the top work so hard to keep us angry and divided because our unity is a threat to their wealth and power. So their cable news networks and their social media algorithms tear us apart.”

“My granddad was a Baptist preacher in South Texas,” Talarico says. “He taught me that we follow a barefoot rabbi who gave us two commandments: love God and love neighbor. Because there is no love of God without love of neighbor. Every single person bears the image of the sacred; every single person is holy – not just the neighbors who look like me or pray like me or vote like me.”

“Those billionaires want to keep us from seeing all that we have in common. They want to keep us from realizing there’s far more that unites us than divides us. Because once we do, we’ll come together – across party, across race, across gender, across religion – to fix what’s broken in our country and take back power for ourselves and our communities.”

“Two thousand years ago, when the powerful few rigged the system, that barefoot rabbi walked into the seat of power and flipped over the tables of injustice. To those who love our country, to those who love our neighbors – it’s time to start flipping tables.”

Talarico is critical of Christian nationalists.

“These politicians want a Christian nation – unless it means providing health care to the sick or funding food assistance for the hungry or raising the minimum wage for the poor,” Talarico told Ezra Klein in January.

“It seems like they want to base our laws on the Bible until they read the words of Jesus – welcome the



stranger, liberate the oppressed, put away your sword, sell all your possessions, and give the money to the poor.”

Talarico questions why Christian nationalists focus on identity issues instead of economic issues.

“Economic justice is mentioned 3,000 times in our Scriptures, both the New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures,” Talarico says. “This is such a core part of our tradition, and it’s nowhere to be seen in Christian nationalism or on the religious right.”

“And the Bible is all over the place when it comes to marriage. Paul tells us not to get married, and you certainly see many different kinds of marriages throughout Scripture. The same with gender. Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female, which is pretty woke for the first century.”

“Again, it’s because religion is being used to control people and accumulate power and wealth for those at the top. This is a tale as old as time, and it is not unique to Christianity. Powerful people will always see religion as a tool to make more money and to keep people in line.”

On funding Israel’s genocide, even as late as January 2026, Crockett voted for H.R. 7006, which sends additional military aid to Israel, including offensive and defensive weapons, while defunding UNRWA and blocking funds to the ICC and the UN’s commission of inquiry.

The bill drew praise from AIPAC

“Economic justice is mentioned 3,000 times in our Scriptures, both the New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures,” Talarico says. “This is such a core part of our tradition, and it’s nowhere to be seen in Christian nationalism or on the religious right”

but 79 members of the House – 22 Republicans and 57 Democrats – voted against it.

While Talarico refuses to call the slaughter in Gaza a genocide, in a recent debate with Crockett, he said the killing in Gaza made him “physically ill.”

“I will use every bit of this country’s financial and diplomatic leverage to end the death and destruction in Gaza, which means banning offensive weapons to the Netanyahu government and ensuring that we have candidates all across this country who are going to speak the truth about this issue,” Talarico said.

Hedge fund manager James Fishback is a devout Catholic who would ban abortion in Florida, impose an immigration moratorium and overturn the H-1B visa system that he says allows thousands of Indian and Chinese nationals to take jobs from Floridians. He would impose a sin tax on the porn site OnlyFans, would halt the construction of AI data centers, arguing they threaten the state’s energy grid, water supply, and increase electric bills – and he would ban investment firms like BlackRock and foreign investors from buying up single family homes in Florida and turning them into Airbnb-like rental properties.

Fishback would also end Florida’s investment in Israeli bonds and overturn a state law that makes it a crime to criticize Israel.

Fishback is polling in the single digits and as of this writing had only \$950 in his campaign bank account. But he’s making national news primarily because of his inflamed rhetoric against Israeli influence over Florida’s government and his Trump endorsed, AIPAC and corporate funded opponent, African-American Congressman Byron Donalds.

“Byron Donalds is a slave. I’m sorry, he’s a slave,” Fishback said at his November 2025 press conference announcing his candidacy. “He is a slave to his donors. He is a slave to the corporate interests, to the tech bros that want to turn our state into, his own words, a financial capital. Why not be an agricultural capital? Why not be a farming capital? Why not be a citrus capital? Again, why do we have to become a financial capital?”

He wants to turn Florida into Dubai, Singapore or Hong Kong. We like Florida just the way it is.”

Fishback says that Florida law prohibits all foreign government bond purchases with one exception – Israel. And Florida has invested \$380 million in Israeli bonds.

“Florida cannot buy the bonds of any country – Luxembourg, Switzerland, the UK – with one exception,” Fishback told Tucker Carlson. “And we decided to send \$385 million to Israel. As Florida governor, I’m going to divest that full \$385 million and then with that money, start a statewide down payment assistance program. There are real concerns with affordability in my state and the number one concern is home ownership.”

“If you can’t buy a home, can you get married? If you can’t get married, can you have kids? If you cannot have kids, then what on earth is the point, Tucker?”

Fishback has been harshly critical of AIPAC funded Congressman Randy Fine (R-Florida), who upon hearing reports of Gazans starving to death last summer tweeted – “Release the hostages. Until then starve away.”

When Fine was in the Florida state legislature, his signature accomplishment was a law that effectively made it a crime to criticize Israel. Governor Ron DeSantis signed the bill into law on an April 2023 visit to Jerusalem.

Fishback would move to repeal that law.

Now in Florida, “it’s against the law to criticize Israel,” Fishback told Carlson.

“Think about that. So if you’re a college student at Florida State University and you’re having an earnest, good faith debate with someone who sympathizes with the Israeli cause, you side with the Palestinian cause. And one of you says – Netanyahu is a war criminal or Israel is committing genocide, you could literally be punished and expelled from your taxpayer funded university. And that is messed up, it is unconstitutional. It’s totally crazy. It’s totally un-American. And of course, the Republicans and Democrats in Tallahassee go along with it because their donors wanted them to go along with that. And Randy Fine is the one who introduced that. And it was his idea to have it signed in Israel.”

Fine also helped push a law through the legislature in 2020 that created a state license plate featuring the flag of Israel and the slogan – *Florida Stands with Israel*. Which it clearly now does. Fishback would move to repeal that law also.

“As Florida governor, there’s gonna be no foreign flags flown on our government buildings or on our state license plates,” Fishback said. **CHC**