

# [***Opinion: What John Fetterman and Mike Johnson have in common***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BW0-TYY1-DY7V-G0WK-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Steering US ***politics*** away from the dysfunctional fringe and back to the wide middle - where most Americans [*reside*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/388988/political-ideology-steady-conservatives-moderates-tie.aspx#:~:text=On%20average%20last%20year%2C%2037,as%20conservative%2C%20moderate%20and%20liberal.) on most issues - will require courage and leadership. Enter two very different voices who are showing us the way: Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson and Democratic Sen. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania.

Let's start with Fetterman, who has enraged the progressive left with his unequivocal [*support for Israel*](https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2023/12/19/lead-fetterman-democrats-israel-hamas.cnn) and his equally steadfast condemnation of the [*Hamas terrorists*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/22/politics/john-fetterman-progressive-democrats/index.html) who raped, murdered and kidnapped their way into a war on [*October 7*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/01/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-intelligence-intl).

Fetterman has no time for members of his own party who can't tell the good guys from the bad guys, and has even criticized [*President Joe Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2024/04/14/sotu-fetterman-full-interview.cnn) for his equivocations toward Israel.

"The president is entitled to his own views and whatever he decides to do. But I would never capitulate to the fringe. I'll never pander to that as well. In fact, that empowers Hamas and Hamas, they're actually convinced that they are winning the PR war. And they're never going to negotiate at this point. They think that they're going to hold onto the very end," [*Fetterman told CNN's Jake Tapper.*](https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2024/04/14/sotu-fetterman-full-interview.cnn)

Fetterman is a whirling dervish of pro-Israel communications. His posts on X, formerly Twitter, take off like rockets, hailed on the center-right and reviled on the fringe left. He's been seen [*wearing an Israeli flag like a cape*](https://nypost.com/2023/11/14/news/fetterman-draped-in-israeli-flag-during-dc-rally-in-support-of-the-jewish-state/) on the National Mall in Washington DC. He taunted protesters at his [*home in Pennsylvania*](https://twitter.com/greg_price11/status/1751083888502362395?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1751083888502362395%7Ctwgr%5Eb60c9b86628f47a8c8ecc42b1e98cfe6be7e479b%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonexaminer.com%2Fnews%2F2822085%2Fjohn-fetterman-greets-protesters-outside-his-home-by-waving-israeli-flag%2F) by going to the roof and waving an Israeli flag at them. He has expressed bewilderment at Democrats who refuse [*to condemn Iran's attacks on Israel.*](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/fetterman-scolds-dem-colleagues-failing-condemn-iran-attack-israel)

And in the last few days, his admonition of disruptive protestors has been a breath of fresh air for a country exhausted by the disruptions.

"I don't know who needs to hear this, but blocking a bridge or berating folks in Starbucks isn't righteous, it just makes you an a\*\*hole. Demand Hamas to send every hostage back home and surrender," [*he posted on X.*](https://twitter.com/SenFettermanPA/status/1780226804990480419?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1780226804990480419%7Ctwgr%5Ed051feab28ef970968846c17417a97a1d694881f%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonexaminer.com%2Fnews%2F2968364%2Ffetterman-denounces-pro-palestinian-protesters-public-disruptions%2F)

Fetterman's backbone on Israel has shocked Republicans and Democrats alike who assumed during his 2022 Senate campaign that he'd fall in line with the progressive outrage of the day. And his bluntness on this topic may have cost him some staff, as three of his communications aides [*resigned recently*](https://triblive.com/news/pennsylvania/all-three-of-john-fettermans-top-communications-staffers-have-resigned-in-the-past-month/?utm_source=ground.news&utm_medium=referral).

But Fetterman - who has also bucked his party's liberal views [*by supporting restrictions on the surge of migrants across the southern border*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/-not-progressive-fetterman-breaks-left-israel-immigration-rcna129747)  - remains unfazed.

"I just think I'm a Democrat that is very committed to choice and other things. But with Israel, I'm going to be on the right side of that. And immigration is something near and dear to me, and I think we do have to effectively address it as well," he told [*NBC News*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/-not-progressive-fetterman-breaks-left-israel-immigration-rcna129747).

But for all of the progressive raging against Fetterman, the people of Pennsylvania appear to like it. [*His approval rating is up a net of seven points since last fall, according to Morning Consult polling.*](https://x.com/nick_d_laughlin/status/1782408198437158931)

On the other side of the Capitol, Johnson found [*religion on foreign aid*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/21/politics/ukraine-aid-mike-johnson-house-speaker-israel-taiwan/index.html) last week and [*led the House to passing a historic package*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/house-vote-ukraine-israel-taiwan-aid-04-20-24/index.html) that helps American allies in Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

Like Fetterman, he [*enraged*](https://www.npr.org/2024/04/19/1245557540/house-aid-bills-ukraine-israel-funding-democrats-johnson) his party's extreme wing in doing so. But Johnson stood before the country and plainly told Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and her fellow malcontents - who are threatening to oust Johnson - [*where to stick it*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/21/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-calls-on-johnson-to-resign-after-house-approves-ukraine-aid/index.html).

"I don't walk around this building being worried about a motion to vacate," [*Johnson said*](https://www.mediaite.com/politics/i-have-to-do-my-job-mike-johnson-claims-hes-not-worried-about-being-ousted-after-passing-ukraine-aide/). "I have to do my job. We did. I've done here what I believe to be the right thing and that is to allow the House to work its will.

"As I've said, you do the right thing and you let the chips fall where they may. I will continue to do that," Johnson added.

Imagine that - a politician who refuses to be held hostage by people who can never be satisfied!

[*Johnson's conclusion of the foreign aid package*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/why-donald-trump-didnt-sink-mike-johnsons-ukraine-aid-bill-81fe8d11) came after a politically deft trip to Mar-a-Lago for a discussion with former President Donald Trump. Johnson took Trump's suggestion of converting some of the Ukraine package to a forgivable loan and pairing it with smart public spin: that Republicans should support Ukraine against Russia now, because if Trump regains the White House, only he has the strength to negotiate a peaceful end to the situation.

[*With Trump taking a helpful public posture*](https://www.axios.com/2024/04/22/trump-mike-johnson-foreign-aid-motion-to-vacate), Johnson led a crushing bipartisan majority in the US House to reassert American leadership in the world and send Greene and her cohorts back to the Island of Misfit Toys.

What Johnson and Fetterman are showing us is that it's possible to govern from the middle, even amid howling from the fringe of both parties.

Most Americans want the US to [*support Israel*](https://www.npr.org/2023/10/13/1205627092/american-support-israel-biden-middle-east-hamas-poll) in the war against Hamas. Most Americans want the US to [*help our allies*](https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/americans-favor-aiding-taiwan-against-china) around the world who are under threat from dictators, thugs and terrorists.

People will respond to principled leadership. They get painfully little these days from most politicians. But from Fetterman and Johnson, it's coming by the truckload.

Opinion by Scott Jennings

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