

# [***Schumer slams Trump criticism of his Israel speech as 'unadulterated antisemitism'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKH-WM41-JBSS-S01H-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer criticized former President Donald Trump's response to the New York Democrat's speech on Israel, noting that the presumptive GOP presidential nominee's remarks were "sick," and "hateful," and included antisemitic tropes.

"The former president's comments were utterly disgusting and a textbook example of the kind of antisemitism facing Jews, pushing the dangerous antisemitism trope of dual loyalty," Schumer said Tuesday.

The highest-ranking Jewish elected official in the United States continued, "To say you hate Israel or your religion because you have one political view over the other is sick. It's hateful, it is unadulterated antisemitism, and it serves to use Israel as a political wedge further damaging the bonds between US and Israel."

[*Trump was asked on a podcast*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/18/politics/trump-antisemitic-jewish-people-israel-support-netanyahu/index.html) hosted by his former White House aide Sebastian Gorka about criticism from the Biden administration and Schumer's comments criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"I actually think they hate Israel," Trump said in the interview, which aired Monday. "I don't think they hate him, I think they hate Israel. And the Democrat Party hates Israel."

Trump directly slammed Schumer, who [*recently criticized Netanyahu's government*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/14/politics/chuck-schumer-israel-election-comments/index.html) and called for new elections in a speech on the Senate floor about Israel's war on Hamas and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"Don't forget, when you see those Palestinian marches, even I, I'm amazed at how many people are in those marches. And guys like Schumer see that, and to him it's votes, I think it's votes more than anything else, because he was always pro-Israel. He's very anti-Israel now," Trump said.

Members of the Senate Republican leadership team largely avoided saying if they have concerns with Trump's comments.

Senate Republican Whip John Thune said he had not closely watched Trump's comments on that subject over the weekend but said, "I guess I'd prefer they would keep religious faith out of these discussions. But like I said, these guys are going to litigate the campaign the way they are going to do it. My expectations is that it's going to be very spirited."

Thune, who is running for GOP leader, added: "The former president speaks his mind and obviously it sounds like President Biden took issue with it. I think those guys will have to figure out how they want to conduct a campaign."

Texas Sen. John Cornyn, who is also running for GOP leader, declined to weigh in.

"I'm not going to comment on the campaign, the presidential campaign because you guys will be asking me every single day about it. And I'm not going to be offering running commentary," Cornyn said

GOP Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming turned the question around and complained about Schumer's speech, which angered Republicans.

"I think what Sen. Schumer said on the floor was deeply offensive to so many Americans who are concerned with what is happening in Israel," he said.

West Virginia Republican Sen. Shelley Moore Capito was short in her response: "I don't agree with that, no. But I also can't control what he says."

GOP Sen. Deb Fischer of Nebraska told CNN, "That's the president's opinion," when asked about Trump's remarks and whether they were appropriate. "I'm not going to get into that. Do you have a policy question for me?"

Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina said that he felt the former president was expressing his "frustration" with Schumer's floor speech and that Trump is "not wrong about Democrat leaders failing the Israeli state" - however, he noted he wouldn't have said it the way Trump did.

"I think President Trump was speaking out of frustration. Part of that has to have been him seeing Chuck Schumer calling for elections, second guessing what the Israelis should be doing right now," said Tillis. "So, I'll leave it - President Trump chooses words that I don't always choose, but he's not wrong about, I think, Democrat leaders failing the Israeli state and second guessing them."

He continued, "I mean, there are members of the war Cabinet are not calling for elections, and they would be the ones who would benefit from it. There are opposition parties that have come together, that says the Israeli state is more important than ***politics***, and I saw ***politics*** on the Senate floor just last week with what Chuck Schumer was saying."

Tillis noted that while he can understand why Trump made those remarks about Schumer's speech, he disagrees with the former president's insistence that January 6 defendants should be pardoned.

"I think that, you know, President Trump, on the Israeli issue, I could see where frustrations come in. With respect to January 6, anybody that entered this building or harmed a police officer needs to be in prison, period," he said.

Some House Republicans attempted to distance themselves from or sidestep Trump's comments on Jewish voters, but wouldn't criticize the presumptive GOP nominee for the White House.

While GOP Rep. Nicole Malliotakis said she doesn't "necessarily agree" with Trump's remarks, she did defend his record on Israel.

"I don't necessarily agree with the statement, but I do question why individuals who are Jewish would not support Israel and in particular be proud of the fact that President Trump returned the embassy there, that he brokered the deals for the Abraham Accords that brought so much prosperity to the Jewish people," the New York lawmaker said.

GOP Rep. Byron Donalds of Florida sidestepped weighing in on Trump's comments, saying he had not seen a tape of the remarks. He instead pivoted to criticizing Schumer, who he said is "meddling in the affairs of Israel," and said Jewish voters who support Democrats should reconsider.

Not all Republicans skipped criticizing Trump. GOP Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska said of Trump's comments, it's an "incredibly wrong and an awful statement."

She also told reporters she would "absolutely not" vote for Trump or Biden.

Netanyahu is expected to address Senate Republicans during their closed-door conference lunch Wednesday via video, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Over the weekend, Netanyahu [*said that Schumer's comments*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/17/europe/benjamin-netanyahu-israel-gaza-interview-intl) were "totally inappropriate."

"I think what he said is totally inappropriate. It's inappropriate to go to a sister democracy and try to replace the elected leadership there," Netanyahu told CNN's Dana Bash on "State of the Union," adding, "That's something the Israeli public does on its own. We are not a banana republic."

This story has been updated with additional reporting.

CNN's Kate Sullivan, Radina Gigova, Sophie Tanno, Clare Foran and Sam Fossum contributed to this report.

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