

# Divestment supporter runs in state representative race

Candidate Moroney and Alderman Provost argue over stance on divestment from Israel

By Ted Siefer

The issue of divestment from Israel has reared its head again in Somerville, this time in a special Democratic primary election for state representative to be held on Jan. 10.

Candidate Elizabeth Moroney has accused her opponent, Somerville Alderman Denise Provost, of denying in recent candidates' forums that she was the lone supporter of a divestment measure voted on by the board of aldermen on Dec. 10, 2004.

"To hear my opponent, who is an acknowledged advocate for divestment from Israel, now deny her votes pushes the envelope of political reality," Moroney said in statement released to the media. "If Alderman Provost now regrets her pro-divestment position, she should actively renounce the ballot question and the Somerville Divestment Project extremist rhetoric against my campaign and Israel."

This week, Provost said she voted to support divestment to protest what she described as a "gag rule" that was passed earlier in the evening, which would have prevented the board from passing any resolutions concerning the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Asked if she supported divestment from Israel, Provost said, "I don't know if it's a good thing or not. It's something [about which] reasonable people can differ."

Provost said, however, that she did not support the tactics of the Somerville Divestment Project, the group that fought for more than a year to get a divest-from-Israel measure passed by the city, and then to get a divestment question on the ballot. Both initiatives failed.

"I do not support the language or the tactics of the SDP," Provost said. "But just as I support the right of Israel to exist in security, I support right of the Palestinian people to exist in security."

Moroney responded: "I have been unequivocal in my opposition to [divestment], whereas my opponent has been vague, at best."

Moroney wrote a letter to a local paper after the SDP's ballot petition forms were ruled invalid, expressing relief that the campaign had failed and insisting that the city needed to address local problems, not foreign policy.

Members of the SDP have since protested at talks by Moroney.

Despite the failure of its campaign, the SDP has continued to stage pro-Palestinian demonstrations.



Protesters and (inset) Elizabeth Moroney.

# Muslim-Jewish tension

Continued from Page 1

kind of hostility. The fact that [the David Project] happened to be a Jewish organization was just unfortunate."

Kazmi said that she was confident that the majority in the Jewish community wouldn't go to the lengths that certain individuals went to in opposing the mosque project, but, she noted, "what I find troubling is that it is not being [recognized] internally in the Jewish community that this type of behavior is inappropriate for anyone to undertake."

Despite the litigation and increased tensions between local Muslims and Jews, a dialogue group founded three years ago by

members of Temple Beth Shalom in Cambridge and the ISB has continued holding discussions on a regular basis. A talk was held in November titled "The Jew in Islam and the Muslim in Judaism," and another discussion is slated for this month. The meetings have involved lay members of the institutions and intentionally avoid politics, focusing instead on religious practices and beliefs.

David Dolev, the program director at Temple Beth Shalom who helps organize the talks, confirmed that the conflict with the ISB has

had a palpable effect on interfaith outreach efforts.

"People don't always differentiate between the ISB and Muslims in general," Dolev said. "Jews are very concerned.

When they read what's going on in the paper, it epitomizes all the stereotypes they have anyway. That makes it another difficult thing we have to work through."

Noting that the ISB is one of the largest Muslim organizations in the state, Dolev said, "It's a big group to blacklist."

Dolev, along with Kazmi of the ISB, founded the Center for Jewish-

Muslim Relations, which, according to the group's Web site, aims to "maintain strong religious and social identities in the pluralistic society of the United States and remove stigmatizing and negative stereotypes of the other." Among the center's board of directors and advisors are Arthur Waldstein of JCRC and Lawrence Lowenthal of the American Jewish Committee.

Construction of the ISB mosque in Roxbury is currently stalled due to a shortage of funds. Asked where the money to fight its defamation lawsuit was coming from, Kazmi said that money was being donated by "a mix of people" specifically for that purpose.

## AD HISTORY

Nov. 11: David Project runs ad in response to lawsuit

Dec. 23: ISB responds

Jan. 6: CJP and JCRC run an ad in response to ISB

## Congress approves school voucher bill

With sponsorship by Sen. Edward Kennedy, Congress has approved legislation that will provide \$1.6 billion in funding to schools and colleges affected by Hurricane Katrina. The most contentious provision opens the way for both public of private schools to receive \$6,000 in federal funding for each student they took in from areas ravaged by the storm.

It is estimated that about 350 of the 370,000 students displaced by the hurricane were enrolled in Jewish schools. Since the storm's aftermath, Jewish institutions across the country have taken in displaced students, thus making them eligible for the new government funding.

## Haverhill synagogue targeted by vandals

Temple Emanu-el of Haverhill has been targeted by vandals in a series of attacks from Labor Day to Chanukah. Rabbi Ira Korinow first discovered that wires to the Temple's menorah had been cut on the second night of Chanukah. The following morning, Korinow found tomato sauce on the temple's front door.

"It's terrible and despicable and does not reflect our community," said Haverhill Mayor James J. Fiorentini. "Many community leaders, including me, were at the Chanukah festival to say that we stand firmly with the Jewish community." The mayor will be introducing a resolution in city council condemning the vandalism.

## State delegates at family court talk

Governor Mitt Romney's office is sending three officials from Massachusetts to a conference in Albany this week that is addressing the family court crisis.

The conference will feature Dr. Amy Neustein, a New Jersey activist for the family court system, who will receive the Woman of Valor Award by the Battered Women's Custody Conference.

"In the past few months that I have made an effort to reach out to Jewish communities around the country, I see an amazing groundswell of activism," said Neustein. She is the author of "From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts and What Can Be Done about It."

## THE JEWISH ADVOCATE®

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Advertising: 617-367-9100 EXT 143

advertising@TheJewishAdvocate.com

classifieds@TheJewishAdvocate.com

Editorial: 617-367-9100 EXT 135

editorial@TheJewishAdvocate.com

communitynews@TheJewishAdvocate.com

Circulation: 617-367-9100 EXT 120

circulation@TheJewishAdvocate.com

The Jewish Advocate

15 School Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Advertising Fax; 617-367-2983 Editorial Fax; 617-367-9310

Tel; 617-367-9100

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