Democratic Representative Haley Stevens endorses Republican Mike Rogers in Michigan Senate race

Kevin Reed
1 November 2026

Democratic Representative Haley Stevens, who was defeated by Abdul El-Sayed in the August primary for Michigan's open US Senate seat, endorsed his Trump-backed Republican opponent, Mike Rogers, on Sunday, two days before the election.

In her video, Stevens said, "Hey Michigan. As you may have seen, our Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate, Abdul, said I was no longer welcome in his campaign and that I should stay away. And he's right—that's why I'm endorsing Mike Rogers for the U.S. Senate today."

Stevens would not have taken this action on her own. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer denounced it as a "despicable betrayal," and her chief of staff and other staff members resigned. But Stevens speaks for a faction of the party leadership that has moved against El-Sayed, hostile to his criticism of Israel's genocide in Gaza and even to the milquetoast social reforms he has proposed.

Sections of the leadership are also wary of what a Democratic Senate majority would mean, and of the expectations it would raise among workers and young people. The Democrats have no intention of meeting those expectations. Their principal concern is to intensify the war against Russia.

The conflict between El-Sayed and Stevens was precipitated by an advertisement linking US support for Israel to unaffordable groceries.

Set in a grocery store, the advertisement shows a couple discussing which items they need to return to the shelves. In one exchange, a shopper tells her husband not to buy eggs because "we have to set that $7 aside for killing Palestinians." The dialogue says that "we give Israel $4 billion a year," then refers to an additional $26 billion and puts the cost at approximately $161 per American taxpayer.

The ad was paid for by Rebellion PAC, an independent political action committee co-founded by Cenk Uygur, host of the online program *The Young Turks*.

Stevens characterized the advertisement as antisemitic and demanded that El-Sayed not only disassociate himself from its producer but condemn it and apologize for his own statements about Israel. She wrote, "But the ad did not invent its argument; it dramatized one Dr. El-Sayed has made in his own words throughout this campaign: that Israel is the reason Michigan cannot afford schools, healthcare, and childcare."

El-Sayed initially emphasized that his campaign had nothing to do with the ad. By Saturday he said, "That ad was not made by me, and I do not agree with the contents of that ad." But the dispute escalated, and on Friday his campaign asked Stevens to stay away from its events. She endorsed Rogers the next day.

On Sunday morning, Stevens appeared with Rogers at Perfecting Church on Detroit's east side and publicly announced her endorsement of the Republican candidate. On X, Rogers called her "a courageous leader who deserves the respect of every Michigan voter."

El-Sayed spent Sunday at Detroit churches with South Carolina Congressman James Clyburn, who introduced him at Greater Emmanuel Institutional Church of God in Christ, where Michigan Representative Debbie Dingell also attended.

Asked on Sunday whether Stevens should join the Republican Party, President Trump said, "I'd love to

© World Socialist Web Site

have her.”

El-Sayed’s dismissal of Stevens’ actions is an effort to obscure the right-wing politics of the Democratic Party that they both represent.

Stevens is a longtime defender of corporate interests, the state of Israel, and an enemy of the working class. Outside groups spent some $60 million on her behalf in the primary, as much as $34 million of it through super PACs backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Her support for Israel was central to the contest. She refused to characterize Israel’s mass killing in Gaza as genocide and opposed a July amendment cutting off $3.3 billion in military assistance. At the April 19 Michigan Democratic convention, delegates booed throughout her remarks. Reports described her being shouted down over her pro-Israel record.

Stevens’ establishment credentials were forged during the Great Recession as chief of staff of the US Auto Rescue Task Force from 2009 to 2011 during the Obama administration. She was a central figure in overseeing the restructuring of General Motors and Chrysler and the federal bailouts that ensured corporate profitability through massive concessions, enforced by the leadership of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in collaboration with the task force.

These arrangements included $14-an-hour starting wages for auto workers, the consolidation of two-tier employment, the elimination of cost-of-living adjustments and restrictions on strikes. The restructuring devastated jobs and benefits while tying union-controlled retiree healthcare finances to company stock performance. Stevens called herself “deeply proud” of that role.

For his part, El-Sayed, who was backed by the UAW apparatus, never challenged Stevens over her participation in the attacks on auto workers. This silence revealed the shared embrace by both candidates of corporate profitability. Immediately following his primary victory, El-Sayed expressed his support for American military aid to Ukraine in the war against Russia, claiming that the US was involved in a “righteous struggle.”

Clyburn’s presence at El-Sayed’s side on Sunday was politically significant. A pillar of the Democratic Party establishment, Clyburn revived Joe Biden’s 2020 presidential campaign against Bernie Sanders with his endorsement. The South Carolina congressman has also denounced demands from liberal forces within the Democratic Party, including calls to defund the police.

Reinforcing his defense of the profit system before the primary, El-Sayed declared, “I am not a socialist. ... I am a capitalist who understands how capitalism works.” Since securing the nomination, he has backtracked on earlier criticisms of Obama’s wars, deportations and attacks on democratic rights.

Asked on NBC’s *Meet the Press* about his previous statements, El-Sayed replied, “I was younger,” and said Democrats today “stand on the shoulders of giants” like Obama. He campaigned with Obama in Detroit on October 24.

Stevens’ endorsement gives critical assistance to the Republicans amid widespread predictions of a “blue wave” that would hand the Democrats control of both houses of Congress. It is entirely in line with the role the Democrats have played throughout both of Trump’s terms. Their overriding fear is that opposition to Trump’s fascism will develop into an independent movement of the working class beyond their control. Stevens’ crossing over to the Republicans and El-Sayed’s embrace of establishment figures like Clyburn are different expressions of the same allegiance to the interests of the capitalist class.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site