

On my mind this month...



Gail Yamner

As 2011 ends, we face a politically charged 2012. We can expect to be bombarded with misleading ads and malicious emails that spread falsehoods about our candidates. We can expect JACs core issues to be used by some for political expediency. December is a good time to take a breath and review the facts.

Support for Israel is strong on both sides of the aisle. This past year the US has given more military aid to Israel than at any previous time. Iron Dome, funded largely by the US, was able to divert missiles shot from Gaza. The US has forcefully opposed the PA's unilateral bid for statehood and stood by Israel when the PA gained membership in UNESCO.

Women, their reproductive rights, health and contraception were the targets of the conservative agenda and HHS Secretary Sebelius' inexplicable decision to overrule the FDA regarding emergency contraception.

Separation of religion and state has become entangled with Choice. The Catholic Bishops are pressing for a wide exemption in the new health care exchanges which would allow their affiliated institutions to refuse to cover contraception or abortion. This would subject thousands of women employed by universities or hospitals (that receive federal funds) to Church doctrine.

Lighting the candles, we invoke the miracle of the oil and the triumph of religious freedom. To maintain that freedom, we must be vigilant.

Giving a donation in someone's honor – or your own – helps us confront challenges. We appreciate your support and wish you a happy Hanukkah and, in the coming year, happiness and peace.

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 Writers: Joy Malkus, Dana Gordon
 President: Gail Yamner
 Executive Director: Marcia Balonick
 Tel (847) 433-5999 Fax (847) 433-6194
 Email jaccpac123@aol.com
 Web www.jaccpac.org © JAC 2011

✪ Israel

2011: STRONG US-ISRAEL TIES

- President Obama, at the U.N. General Assembly and numerous times before and since, in front of friendly and unfriendly audiences, has reiterated his commitment to Israel's security and to the bonds of friendship between the United States and Israel. Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak told Fox News, "Our countries are good friends. I can hardly remember a better period of support...cooperation...and similar strategic understanding of events around us than what we have right now."

- President Obama led the funding effort for the Iron Dome missile defense system and committed to Operation "Juniper Cobra" – a joint military exercise to strengthen coordination between US and Israeli missile defense systems, planned for 2012.

- On September 8, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman testified that the Obama Administration would veto a resolution supporting a unilaterally declared Palestinian state. The US worked behind the scenes to convince members of the U.N. Security Council that the Administration's position – that statehood can be achieved only through direct negotiations – is correct. Consequently, a resolution never came before the Security Council.

- The administration has consistently supported the foreign aid package to Israel, rebuffed any efforts to decrease or revise the current ten-year plan and has spoken against attempts to delegitimize the state.

Situations arise – ones that are non-security related – that simply call for friends taking care of friends in need.

- Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, praised President Obama in a recent interview with *Israel Hayom*. "About a year ago when the fire broke out in the Carmel forest...I went to the White House, late in the evening and asked to meet with the President. Obama

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🇺🇸 United States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The 2011 War on Women is at a critical juncture: Plan B restrictions, abortion coverage denied for military women, Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act, Catholic Church opposition to contraception coverage, HR 3 - No Tax Payer Funding for Abortion Act, HR 358 - Protect Life Act, HR 1 - strip funding from Planned Parenthood, elimination of Title X funding, end of funding for abortions for low-income women who live in DC, S1005 - requirement of abortion providers to notify parents by mail if their minor daughter seeks an abortion, HR 1216 - bar medical teaching centers from teaching abortion care. These examples, paired with laws around the country that are aimed at limiting women's reproductive choices, have made 2011 a terrible year for women's reproductive rights.

With joblessness at record high levels, two wars, and global upheaval, Congress has decided to devote its legislative energies to women's reproductive rights. A majority of the House voted to let women in emergency situations die in order to respect the religious beliefs of doctors who refused to perform life-saving abortions. More recently HHS chief Kathleen Sebelius rebuked the FDA and ruled against over-the-counter access to Plan B. Catholic Bishops are lobbying to ban contraception coverage from insurance plans.

Not all is lost though. Voters have rejected the most egregious measures such as personhood referenda in two states. President Obama's health care bill will provide contraception for women without co-pays. He lifted the global gag rule. Senators have introduced laws to repeal ineffective and incomplete abstinence-only education. Planned Parenthood has maintained its federal funding. The US Senate has not allowed anti-choice bills from the House to become law.

A pro-choice Senate and a pro-choice President are all that stand between anti-choice lawmakers and repeal of

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Research & Races

2012 Senate Races: Year-end Status (* = JAC-supported)

Outcomes will determine which party controls the Senate.

State	Inc Pty	Candidates	Rating
AZ Open Kyl retiring	R	Dem. Primary candidates: former st. party chair Don Bivens; former US Surgeon Gen. Richard Carmona Repub. Primary candidates: businessman Will Cardon; US Rep. Jeff Flake <i>Carmona is a good candidate with moderate credentials, worked for George W. Bush and would appeal to the Latino community. If Carmona wins Dem. primary, rating moves to Lean R.</i>	Likely Repub.
CT Open Lieberman retiring	I	Dem. Primary candidates: Secy of State Susan Bysiewicz, US Rep. Chris Murphy, st. Rep. William Tong Repub. Primary candidates: Linda McMahon, 2010 Sen. nominee and former WWF CEO; former US Rep. Chris Shays (and 3 others); <i>Not a race to watch until after the late August primary</i>	Lean Dem.
FL Bill Nelson*	D	Repub. Primary candidates: state House Majority Leader Adam Hasner; former US Senator (appointed) George LeMieux; former US Rep. Connie Mack (and 3 others) <i>Incumbent has the advantage, but this race could become a toss-up.</i>	Lean Dem.
HI Open Akaka* retiring	D	Dem. Primary candidates: former US Rep. Ed Case; US Rep. Mazie Hirono Repub. candidate: former Governor Linda Lingle <i>Hawaii favors Dems but with Lingle in the race it is a toss-up.</i>	Toss-up
ME Olympia Snowe*	R	Repub. primary candidates: Scott D'Amboise, fmr. town selectman; Andrew Ian Dodge, Tea Pty activist Dem Primary candidates: st. Rep. Jon Hinck and former Sec. of State Matt Dunlap <i>Right wing and Tea Party activists would like to topple long-serving and popular moderate Snowe.</i>	Likely Repub.
MA Scott Brown	R	Dem. Primary candidates: Alan Khazei, 2010 Sen. candidate; Elizabeth Warren, special adviser to the US Treasury Secretary.; Setti Warren, Newton Mayor <i>Elizabeth Warren leads in polls against primary opponents and Brown.</i>	Toss-up
MI Debbie Stabenow*	D	Repub. Primary candidates: Gary Glen, former American Family Assoc president.; Randy Hekman, Michigan Family Forum president; former US Rep. Peter Hoekstra (3 others)	Lean Dem.
MO Claire McCaskill*	D	Repub. Primary candidates: US Rep. Todd Akin; businessman John Brunner; Sarah Steelman, former st. Treasurer and 2008 gubernatorial candidate <i>Brunner may be the strongest because of ability to self-fund; Missouri leans Republican and McCaskill's approval ratings are low.</i>	Toss-up
MT Jon Tester*	D	Repub. candidate: US Rep. Dennis Rehberg <i>Montana favors the Repub. Rehberg, at-large rep. for 12 years, has statewide name ID.</i>	Toss-up
NE Ben Nelson	D	Repub. Primary candidates: Atty. Gen. Jon Bruning; st. Treas. and former AG Don Stenberg (3 others) <i>Nelson has not declared for re-election. Open seat would favor Repub. candidate.</i>	Toss-up
NV Dean Heller	R	Dem. candidate: US Rep. Shelley Berkley.* <i>Berkley is running a strong race but the Nevada economy is terrible and she may be blamed. Heller was appointed. This is his first Senate race.</i>	Toss-up
NM Open Bingaman* retiring	D	Dem. Primary candidates: state Auditor Hector Balderas; US Rep. Martin Heinrich (1 other) Repub. Primary candidates: Lt. Gov. John Sanchez; former US Rep. Heather Wilson (2 others) <i>Both Primaries will be tight. The race won't solidify until after June 5.</i>	Toss-up
ND Open Conrad* retiring	D	Repub. candidate: US Rep. Rick Berg Dem. candidate: former AG Heidi Heitkamp <i>Demographics favor the Repub. but polls show Berg and Heitkamp tied.</i>	Lean Repub.
OH Sherrod Brown*	D	Repub. candidate Josh Mandel, state Treasurer (2 others) <i>Mandel is Jewish, Iraq veteran, strong fundraiser, right wing. This will be a contentious race.</i>	Lean Dem.
PA Bob Casey	D	Ten potential Repub. challengers but Casey has the edge.	Likely Dem.
VA Open Webb retiring	D	Dem. candidate: Tim Kaine,* former Governor and DNC Chair Repub. candidate: George Allen, former US Sen. and former Governor	Toss-up
WA Maria Cantwell	D	Repub. candidate: st. Sen. Michael Baumgartner <i>Incumbency and demographics favor Cantwell (who meets JAC criteria but does not accept PAC money).</i>	Likely Dem.
WI Open Kohl retiring	D	Repub. candidates: fmr. Gov. and fmr. HHS Secy Tommy Thompson and fmr. Rep. Mark Neumann Dem. candidate: Rep. Tammy Baldwin <i>Neumann running to the right of mainstream Thompson. Baldwin among most liberal in Congress.</i>	Toss-up

Dems. Cardin*(MD), Carper*(DE), Feinstein*(CA), Gillibrand*(NY), Klobuchar*(MN), Menendez*(NJ) and Whitehouse*(RI) have no top-tier opponents and are rated safe for re-election at this time.

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was in the middle of a party...I told him that a huge fire was raging in the Carmel...Obama called a senior advisor and ordered: 'Whatever Israel wants, get it to Israel right now.' The next morning, representatives of the American firefighters presented us with eight Hercules planes." Oren also

recounted that the administration's response to rescuing the Israeli Embassy team in Cairo was identical. When PM Netanyahu called the President late on a Friday night to say, "I need you," the President took immediate action and the Israeli team was evacuated safely. Friends sometimes disagree and mis-

understandings occur, but in the areas that count, the US-Israel relationship is as strong or stronger than ever. The generals speak often, the President doesn't hesitate to express his commitment and Israel's Prime Minister knows he can count on Washington when needed.

Reproductive Rights, continued from page one

the pro-choice community's successes. As social conservatives continue their fight against women's reproductive rights, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) says of reproductive rights,

"this legislation has awoken the sleeping giant of my generation. It's been complacent for so many years, taking the right to choose for granted, thinking it's never under assault." (*The Hill*,

2/11) In 2012, as always, JAC will not take anything for granted. JAC will continue to fight for women's reproductive rights and support candidates who will do the same.