

Presidential Outlook



Janna Berk

At what point do we decide that enough is enough? Recent news concerning the Hobby Lobby decision by the Supreme Court is on the radar screens of even my most “non-political” friends,

raising questions in my mind as to what it really takes to move people to action. I’ve heard true disgust expressed at the thought of an employer being able to decide, based on his/her religious beliefs, that employees will be denied insurance coverage for birth control. But the discussions are more compelling because of the finality of the decision; when the highest court in the land rules on a case like Hobby Lobby, we have reached our option of last resort.

So is this what it takes to bring something to the forefront of public awareness? Those of us who are long-time JAC members know that we’ve been beating the drums on the issue of women’s reproductive rights for years. We’ve recognized that elections have consequences, and that the time to act is long before legislation comes to a vote, or a case comes before the courts. JAC offers many opportunities to be engaged, actively, in the efforts to bring about change. But the question is, even in the wake of outrage over the Hobby Lobby decision, how many of us have committed to doing something about it?

Maybe now is the time to answer this question, by joining with us at our annual Washington, D.C. Fly-In on September 17 - 18. JAC members from across the country come together for one day to take action, and to answer the call to advance change, instead of just talking about it. Whatever “taking action” means to you - becoming informed, speaking with members of Congress, participating in high-level issues briefings, or simply being among like-minded women and men - JAC’s D.C. Fly-In provides it. We hope you’ll join us this year. Enough is enough. ✿

ELECTIONS MATTER

☆ Israel & the Middle East

After another weekend of intense fighting, tunnels from Gaza to Israel have been discovered and destroyed, casualties have mounted, and Israel has lost many brave soldiers. “In battle there are casualties, but our role is to fulfill missions — and we will continue in that,” said Lt. Gen. Gantz. To the “misfortune of Gaza’s residents,” Gantz said, Hamas “instead of building houses, schools, hospitals and factories,” had built a war machine in residential areas. (*Times of Israel* 7/21/14)

President Obama again reaffirmed the strong relationship between the United States and Israel, emphatically stressing Israel’s right to defend its citizens from Hamas’s rockets. On July 18th, President Obama said, “I spoke with PM Netanyahu of Israel about the situation in Gaza. I reaffirmed my strong support

ISRAEL continued on page 2

♀ Reproductive Rights

Women’s reproductive choice was delivered a huge blow by the Supreme Court this month in two suits, brought by anti-choice advocates, and attacked choice from different sides.

McCullen v Coakley challenged a Massachusetts law providing for a 35-foot buffer zone around abortion clinics, claiming a violation of the First Amendment’s free speech clause. The unanimous decision against the buffer zones was the most significant abortion-related ruling since the 2007 decision upholding the ban on late term abortions. (*Politico* 6/27/14) “Thanks to the Supreme Court, we are back to a world where women seeking health care face a gauntlet of harassment just to see their doctor,” wrote Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts President Martha Walz. (*Huff Post Politics* 7/13/14)

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS continued on page 3

⚖ Separation of Religion & State

This past term of the Supreme Court saw an important shift on religion. In the case *Town of Greece v Galloway*, the Court upheld a New York town’s practice of opening its public meetings with a prayer by a Christian minister, despite complaints of non-Christian residents. The Court held that the First Amendment’s shield for free speech allows public officials to opt for Christian prayers only. Following that decision, the Court ruled the religious rights of business owners in *Burwell v Hobby Lobby*, exceed the reproductive rights of women. In this case the Court decided that Hobby Lobby Stores qualified as a “person” and that providing the full range of contraceptives put a “substantial burden” on its exercise of religion. In her dissent, Justice Ginsburg warned “that giving religious exemptions to employers would have a startling breadth.” (*Los Angeles Times* 7/16/2014)

SEPARATION continued on page 2

& Beyond the Core

The U.S. House passed an amendment making the nation’s Capitol the most permissive gun jurisdiction in the nation. (*Roll Call* 7/17/2014) The amendment, offered by U.S. Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) would allow Washington, DC residents to purchase guns without background checks and waiting periods. They could also purchase unlimited number of guns in any given day. With gun violence on the rise across the country, this move further weakens our country’s gun laws and will most likely lead to more violence in our communities.

BEYOND THE CORE continued on page 2

Go to www.JACPAC.org for more information on JAC’s issues.

for Israel's right to defend itself. No nation should accept rockets being fired into its borders or terrorists tunneling into its territory. In fact, during the conversation, sirens went off in Tel Aviv." (*Washington Post Transcript* 7/18/2014)

JAC is thankful to the United States Senate unanimously passing S.498, giving "support for the State of Israel as it defends itself against unprovoked rocket attacks from the Hamas terrorist organization." This spending bill approved a \$620 million missile defense package for Israel, which includes \$350 million for the short-range missile interceptor system called the Iron Dome. The Iron Dome, a joint development between Israel and the United States — the funding for which was championed by President Barack Obama in 2010 — is credited with keeping Israelis safe from the constant rocket attacks by intercepting the weapons before they hit targets in Israel, with an 86% effective rate. Senator **Dick Durbin** (D-IL), chairman of the Senate Defense Subcommittee of Appropriations, indicated that Iron Dome's success during the hostilities helped spur support for the package because "the system works." (*JTA* 7/16/14)

Following Hamas's rejection of an Egyptian ceasefire proposal, Israel initiated the first ground offensive in the Palestinian territories in over 5 years. Israel entered Gaza in an attempt to destroy Hamas's weapons arsenal, their rocket firing abilities and tunnels used to send terrorists from Gaza into Israel, with the goal of restoring security for Israel's citizens by stopping Hamas attacks. (*Times of Israel* 7/18/14)

Israel declared a 'humanitarian ceasefire' in Gaza, allowing Gazans to stock up on supplies and goods, but saw Hamas rocket attacks continue during the abatement. Critics of Israel cite the high death totals on the Palestinian side; more Palestinians than Israelis have died at this point, and numerous news outlets stress this fact when covering the conflict. The IDF takes extensive steps to reduce civilian casualties, including distributing leaflets advising Gazans to evacuate areas, while Hamas continues to use their own civilians as human shields calling on residents to return to their homes, putting rockets in mosques and schools, and even local hospitals. (*Ynet News* 7/14/14)

When describing the situation, Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) says, "There is no moral equivalency between Israel and Hamas. Hamas is a terrorist group that remains bent on the destruction of Israel and its citizens. They fling rockets over the border without regard to civilian lives or public safety. Their intent is to terrorize and inflict as much pain as possible." (*New York Post* 7/17/2014)

JAC prays for the safety and well being of the people of Israel. We hope that the two sides can resume peace talks in the near future.

SEPARATION continued

As the term ended, Wheaton College, an evangelical liberal arts college in Illinois, received an emergency temporary injunction allowing it to refuse to comply with the religious accommodation provided in the Affordable Care Act, and reinforced in the Hobby Lobby decision. Using religious grounds, the college said that it could not sign a form stating their religious objections because doing so would authorize a third party insurance carrier to step in and provide coverage. (*Los Angeles Times* 7/16/14) Three justices: Sotomayor, Kagan and Ginsburg, joined in a strongly worded 16-page dissent to protest the Wheaton College decision as overstepping the Hobby Lobby decision. (*Slate* 7/16/2014)

The Greens, the Evangelical Christian family who owns Hobby Lobby, acquired a 400,000 square foot space near the National Mall in 2012 for \$50 million in order to open a Bible Museum. Steve Green, President of Hobby Lobby, has referred to the bible as a reliable historical document and is developing a curriculum to "reintroduce the bible to the nation." Many groups that promote the separation of religion and state have major concerns that this museum will attempt to influence Congress as well as blur the line between educating and evangelizing. (*New York Times* 7/17/2014)

This past term has strengthened the resolve of JAC to elect Senators that will confirm Justices who respect the separation of religion and state as well as our other issues.

BEYOND THE CORE continued

Ironically, the Violence Prevention Center announced the same week that there are now more gun-related deaths in Washington, DC than traffic deaths. This is also true in 15 states. (*Violence Policy Center* 7/17/2014). More than 90 percent of American households own a car while little more than a third of American households have a gun.

In a minor victory, the Sportsman Bill, to open up more public lands to hunters and fishermen and to block more regulation of their equipment did not receive enough votes to advance to the full Senate for debate and a vote. (*Miami Herald* 7/10/2014) Connecticut Senators **Chris Murphy** and **Richard Blumenthal** gained bi-partisan support to keep the bill from reaching the Senate floor. "I fundamentally believe that before the Senate debates a proposal expanding the use of guns on federal lands, we should first address the plague of gun violence in our communities," Murphy said in a statement. "Since the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Congress has done nothing to prevent gun violence in our schools, in our homes, and on our streets. That should be our number one focus." (*Connecticut Mirror* 7/10/2014)

As open gun laws sweep the nation, two Catholic dioceses in Georgia stood up to their state's "gun everywhere" law and banned guns and other weapons from church facilities. (*TalkingPointsMemo* 7/17/2014) Georgia's lenient gun laws allow open carry in bars, schools, churches and some government buildings. Anyone bringing weapons into the church would be charged with trespassing.

ELECTIONS MATTER

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS *continued*

In *Burwell v Hobby Lobby*, SCOTUS ruled 5 to 4 that closely held corporations may seek an exemption under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and could therefore be exempt from the ACA's (Affordable Care Act) birth control coverage mandate. By saying that a "closely held" corporation shares the religious exercise rights of its owners, "...leads American law into a treacherous minefield," said Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg in her strong dissent. (*PFAW.org* 6/30/2014) "Closely held" simply means not publicly traded. The top 5 closely held corporations in America (Mars, Inc., Cargill, Koch Industries, Dell, and Bechtel) employ more than 436,000 people. For the first time, the Supreme Court declared that corporations can impose the religious beliefs of their owners to deny access to basic health care coverage. (Senator Kirsten Gillibrand 7/9/2014)

The majority opinion, written by Justices Roberts, Scalia, Thomas, Kennedy and Alito would allow the vast majority of employers to refuse to cover contraception as part of employees' health insurance policies, as 90% of American corporations are considered closely held. Sen. **Mark Udall** wrote that this decision allows a boss to impose his own personal religious beliefs on employees, which was the antithesis of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, written to protect employees rights to practice their faiths. (*Buzzfeed* 7/14/2014)

The Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act (also called "Not My Boss' Business Act") was introduced in the Senate to override the Hobby Lobby decision and prevent employers from discriminating against women and imposing their own religious beliefs on their employees. This bill would insure that women have access to their contraceptive needs through their insurance plans, making it affordable for millions of women. The largest association of US board-certified gynecologists endorsed this legislation, saying, "we support the bill because a woman's boss has no role to play in her personal health care decisions." (*Huffington Post Politics* 7/14/2014) On July 16, every Democratic and 3 Republicans Senators supported the Act, but could not overcome the 60 votes needed to prevent the filibuster led by anti-choice Senators. (*The Hill* 7/16/2014)

NEWSbreak

What is Pro-Choice?

JACPAC supports members of the US House and Senate who vote to support issues concerning women's reproductive health:

- **Full reproductive rights** for women including protecting the right to safe, legal abortion; working on ways to reduce the need for abortion - including increased access to contraception and family planning options - and supporting women who choose to carry a pregnancy to term.
- **Access to Reproductive Health Services:** mammograms, cancer screenings, STI treatment, fertility research, in vitro fertilization (IVF)
- **Family Planning access**, including contraception, in the US and abroad
- **Stem Cell Research**
- **Sex Ed** that is comprehensive and fact-based

PRO-CHOICE does not mean PRO-ABORTION

It means allowing women to make the **CHOICE** about how and when to manage their reproductive options.

Opposite of Pro-Choice is Anti-Choice

We are all pro-life. We believe that the life of a woman is important. We believe women are smart, capable, and deserve to make their own decisions.

SOME ANTI-CHOICE LAWS WE OPPOSE:

The Hyde Amendment: Federal law banning medicaid and other federal funds from paying for abortions.

Personhood: States life begins at conception; confers full rights on an unborn fetus; effectively bans abortion and some birth control.

Waiting Periods: Arbitrary restrictions set by legislators imposing waiting periods of 1-3 days between office visit and procedure. **"Fetal Pain" Laws:** Abortion bans based on false and disproven claims that pain receptors are formed by 20 weeks of gestation.

Mandatory Ultrasounds: State-imposed invasive and expensive procedures forced on women seeking abortion care, usually not covered by insurance.

State-written scripts and pamphlets: State mandated, medically incorrect information doctors and clinics are required to read to women prior to an abortion.

JAC is PRO-CHOICE



JOIN JAC IN WASHINGTON
SEPTEMBER 17-18, 2014

BE INVOLVED
BE BRAVE
MAKE YOUR VOICE
HEARD

HOTEL RESERVATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 19TH.
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DETAILS TO FOLLOW.

JAC Happenings Around the U.S.



With Michelle Nunn, GA Candidate for Senate. (l to r: Linda Rae Sher, Marcia Balonick, Dana Hirt, Joy Malkus, Marilyn Cohen, Michelle Nunn, Hollis Wein, Janna Berk



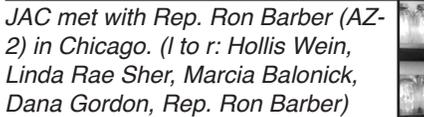
JAC member Jackie Cohen with Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-36)



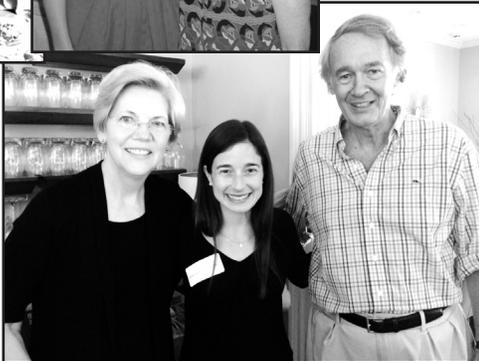
Lunch with Rep. Patrick Murphy (FL-18). (l to r: Marcia Balonick, Rep. Murphy, Dana Gordon, Janna Berk, Linda Rae Sher and 2 guests of Rep. Murphy)



JAC member Nancy Hoffman with Alison Lundergan Grimes, candidate for US Senate from KY



JAC met with Rep. Ron Barber (AZ-2) in Chicago. (l to r: Hollis Wein, Linda Rae Sher, Marcia Balonick, Dana Gordon, Rep. Ron Barber)



Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey of MA joined a gathering of JAC members in Martha's Vineyard. (l to r: Sen Elizabeth Warren, Deborah Gordon Klehr, Sen Ed Markey)



With Rep. Tammy Duckworth (IL-8). (r to l back: Dana Gordon, Steve Sheffey, Linda Rae Sher. r to l front: Rep. Duckworth, Joy Malkus)



Elections Matter

We support a strong U.S./Israel relationship, reproductive choice, and separation of religion and state.

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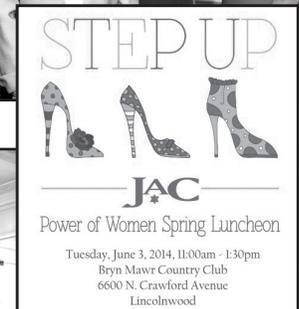
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Our Co-Chairs, Honoree and Guest Speakers for this year's sold out luncheon. (r to l: Capricia Marshall, Co-Chair Lauren Lustbader, Honoree Lois Zoller, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Co-Chair Kim Shwachman



Over 400 JAC members, elected officials and guests attended JAC's 4th Annual Power of Women Luncheon in June - a record turnout event!



For more information, go to www.JACPAC.org.