

Director's Outlook



Marcia Balonick

JAC was founded as a pro-Israel PAC on the belief that a strong U.S.-Israel relationship was vital for the future of the Jewish state. This summer's debate over passage of the Iran Deal caused a large rift in our community and concern for the bipartisan nature of that relationship. I worried that fighting over the details of the deal would sever relationships that were built over decades

As terror gripped Israel in the past weeks, our community has come together again. We have spoken out against the terrorism and have been glued to the news over every new development. Congress has worked in a bipartisan manner to defend Israel, and decry the attempts to erase the Jewish history in the land of Israel. Our Administration spoke forcefully in defense of Israel, and voted against the attempts at the United Nations to reclassify the historical heritage of the Western Wall.

We worry about the terrorism and pray for peace and security in Israel. As we move into the 2016 election season, I hope that the Jewish community will try to find agreement and work together. Peace and security in Israel and a strong U.S.-Israel are our goals. We may disagree over how to attain these goals, sometimes strongly, but we should not let these disagreements make our friends and neighbors into enemies. ❁



JAC was honored at the Personal PAC luncheon with the Irving B. Harris Spirit of Choice Award

ELECTIONS MATTER

✡ Israel & the Middle East

This past month has seen a marked increase in violence in Israel, as tensions flared over the status of the Temple Mount. The sharp increase in terror attacks on Israelis by Palestinians has killed 10 Israelis, an Eritrean refugee, and 50 Palestinians. (JTA 10/21/15)

The attacks against civilians and soldiers have mainly been carried out by young Palestinians with knives who support Palestinian views that Jews have no religious history in the land of Israel. There have been calls by Palestinian and Arab leaders to "protect" the Temple Mount from Jewish visitors, who are allowed to visit but not pray there. Unfounded rumors have swirled that the Israelis were planning to change the status of, and access to, the Temple Mount, also home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. President Abbas said, "Jews have no right to desecrate the mosque with

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♀ Reproductive Rights

Abortion rights are at stake in America, on both the federal and state level. Bills have been introduced in both Houses of Congress and in many state legislatures to further restrict or effectively ban access to abortion services. Current and recently passed restrictions have made abortion almost inaccessible for women living in red states. Key reproductive issues will be decided during the upcoming term of the Supreme Court.

Since Republicans swept statehouses in 2010, states have slapped a record 288 restrictions on abortion, according to the Guttmacher Institute. Some laws require doctors to provide medically false information to their patients; some make women wait up to 72 hours between mandatory counseling and the procedure; some ban abortion at a point earlier than determined by the Supreme Court. For women seeking abortions, the most consequential laws seem the most banal: laws

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS continued on page 3

⚖ Separation of Religion & State

As certain presidential candidates speak to their bases about their "Christian values" and discuss which bible verses are their favorite, we must remember that we live in a country that separates religion and state. Our constitution states, "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Yet candidate Ben Carson recently said that no Muslim should be allowed to be president. Another candidate, former-governor Mike Huckabee, often cites God in his statements, claims that the constitution and even guns are God-given, and believes the bible trumps the U.S. Supreme Court and the Constitution in government.

GOP candidates Donald Trump, Carly Fiorina, Ben Carson, Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum, and Mike Huckabee have all made concerted efforts to reach

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⌘ Beyond the Core

With the latest mass shooting, at Umpqua Junior College in Oregon, the nation's attention was drawn to the ugly truth that there have been 312 mass shootings since the beginning of 2015. President Obama implored the American people to come together and "think about how they can get our government to change these laws, and to save lives, and to let young people grow up." (Whitehouse.gov) He said it won't be easy and it will require a change of politics on this issue. Elections matter and, as President Obama said, if voters think gun violence is a problem, then they should expect their elected officials to reflect those views.

BEYOND THE CORE continued on page 3

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

ISRAEL continued

their dirty feet,” and “every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem is pure, every martyr will reach paradise, and every injured person will be rewarded by God.” (*The Atlantic* 10/16/15)

President Obama, responding to the violent outbreak, asked leaders to tamp down inflammatory rhetoric. He said, “we condemn, in the strongest possible terms, violence directed against innocent people and believe that Israel has a right to maintain basic law and order and protect its citizens from violence...” (*The Guardian* 10/17/15)

In response to the violence, the Palestinian leaders appealed to UNESCO, a United Nations agency, to declare the Western Wall and other Jewish sites as Muslim holy sites. Israel’s Foreign Ministry called the proposal, “an attempt to distort history and blur the connection between the Jewish people and its holiest place and to create a false reality.” (*JTA* 10/19/15) The proposal blames the escalation of violence solely on Israel. France introduced a proposal to call for an international presence on the Temple Mount, which was rejected by Secretary Kerry, who also worked to get the proposal reclassifying the Western Wall left out of the resolution. The proposal was approved by 26 UNESCO members, with the US and five other countries voting against it. (*NYT* 10/22/15) Every Jewish member of Congress condemned this anti-Israel resolution.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff met with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu pledging to work with Israel to meet growing regional challenges. The Syrian civil war, ISIS, and the new wave of Palestinian terror were major topics of discussion. Chairman Dunford pledged to continue to build on the US relationship with Israel. (*USA Today* 10/18/15) Netanyahu has said, “to generate hope, we have to stop the terrorism, to stop the terrorism, we have to stop the incitement, and it is time the international community told President Abbas to stop the incitement...” (*Big Story AP*, 10/22/15) In a recent meeting between Sec. Kerry and PM Netanyahu, Kerry condemned the wave of Palestinian attacks and urged an end to all incitement and violence.

We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, violence directed against innocent people and believe that Israel has a right to maintain basic law and order and protect its citizens from violence....

*President Barack Obama
October 2015*

Many news outlets have reported on the violence, and the Jewish community and many others have heavily criticized their coverage. Some outlets have used false moral equivalences between terrorists and those in Israel defending themselves from terrorism. *The LA Times*’ headline on 10/11/15 “6 Palestinian Teens Die Amid Mideast Unrest” left out that those teens were involved in terrorist attacks against Israelis. (*National Review* 10/15/15) MSNBC apologized for using “not factually accurate” maps in a segment discussing the violence that has erupted across Israel in recent weeks. (*JTA* 10/21/15) The BBC’s former chairman slammed the corporation’s misleading coverage of the recent violence. (*Algemeiner* 10/19/15)

Despite the violence and the coverage, thousands in Paris, Rome and Madrid have rallied in solidarity for Israel. Members of Congress have voiced their support, and have joined the administration in vows to increase the security assistance to Israel. Israeli and American diplomats are putting together a plan to increase annual U.S. military aid to Israel by as much as \$1 billion, on top of the current \$3.1 billion, a source close to the military aid process. (*Haaretz* 10/21/15)

PM Netanyahu and President Obama will meet on November 9th in the United States—hopefully these talks will mend some fences between the leaders.

Support #GunSense - order your JAC t-shirt today!



What better way to show your support for #gunsense and commitment to both gun violence prevention and JAC than this stylish shirt? A donation of \$50 or more to JAC will help us continue to advocate on issues important to us all. Join JAC members in standing up for gun safety in our communities and in our country.

After you order your shirt, take a photo wearing it and submit it to info@jacpac.org. We will publish it in our next EZ Read or NewsBreak!

To order, go to www.jacpac.org/donations/jac-pac-donation. Donate \$50 or more and note your preferred size and mailing address in the box provided. Or call the JAC office at 847.433.5999.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS *continued*

requiring doctors at abortion clinics to have hospital admitting privileges and mandating abortions only be performed in ambulatory surgical centers. Major medical associations agree: these laws are unnecessary and make women less safe.

Many clinics have been forced to close. A safe and legal abortion can't be obtained at a clinic that doesn't exist. Attorneys for the states claim that women can easily go out of state for an abortion. But under the new laws, almost half the clinics in a thousand-mile area — from El Paso, TX, east to Huntsville, AL — face closure. These laws could leave just one clinic each in Oklahoma, Alabama, and Louisiana. In Texas, a state with 5.4 million women of reproductive age, no more than 10 clinics will remain. (*MSNBC 10/19/2015*)

The House recently passed 3 bills - *H.R. 3504*, which dictates medical requirements for certain abortion procedures and imposes criminal and civil penalties on doctors; *H.R. 3134* which would ban taxpayer funds to Planned Parenthood for one year; and *H.Res. 461*, to create a select committee to investigate “live birth abortions,” federal funding for abortion providers, and fetal “organ sales.” President Obama has promised to veto these bills if they come to his desk. In the Senate, *H.R. 36* – a 20 week abortion ban – was blocked, being unable to gain 60 votes. With the majority in both Houses being anti-choice, more of these bills will be introduced. (*Congress.gov*)

In October, Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, was questioned during a House Committee hearing investigating the organization. Millions of women receive contraception, cancer screenings, testing and treatment for STD's, and other preventive care at Planned Parenthood clinics. Rep. Diane Black (R-TN) argued that abortion is not health care, yet abortion is a legal medical procedure that 30% of American women have accessed in their lifetimes. (*Cosmo 10/9/2015*)

Planned Parenthood is also a target of state legislatures. Texas recently became the 6th state to ban Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid reimbursement. This tactic has been blocked by federal judges in Louisiana, Indiana and Arizona. President Obama has said that states that cut Medicaid funds to Planned Parenthood would be in violation of federal law. (*US News & World Report 10/19/15*) Planned Parenthood is banned by Hyde Amendment from using government funds to pay for abortions.

Hospital policies also affect a woman's right to reproductive health care. As more hospitals merge, Catholic groups are increasingly gaining control of hospitals around the country. One in nine hospital beds in the U.S. are in Catholic facilities. The ACLU is currently suing the largest Catholic health system because they limit what physicians can do and say based on Catholic beliefs. These religious directives could jeopardize the lives of women who are pregnant and in life-threatening situations. (*Time Oct. 2015*)

JAC is worried about the political landscape surrounding women's reproductive rights. We will continue to fight for all women to have access for all health procedures regardless of where they live or how much money they have. Elections matter, and choice is at stake.

BEYOND THE CORE *continued*

Fifty-five percent of Americans now support stricter gun laws, up 8 percent over 2014. (*Gallup 10/19/2015*) In response, Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** (CA-12) announced a bipartisan task force to reduce gun violence. JAC met with Pelosi recently and discussed gun safety legislation. She said that Congress has the votes to support expanded background checks. However, Republicans will not let the bills come to the House floor. (*New York Times 10/9/2015*)

Gun violence is becoming an issue in the Presidential race. Hillary Clinton said “I think we have to keep talking, but more importantly, we have to act. We have to be willing to take on those who are not in favor of sensible gun-safety measures. That includes the NRA, and it includes a lot of people in public life today who are intimidated. I think that is no longer feasible.” (*Politico 10/16/2015*) Clinton favors expanded background checks and other measures which would reduce gun violence in this country. Presidential candidates in both parties have been at odds over gun regulations—the Democrats want more regulations, while the Republicans want fewer regulations and more access.

In 2015, 43 children have shot themselves or others with unsecured guns. (*Washington Post 10/19/2015*) Recently, while braiding her daughter's hair, a mother's gun fell to the floor, discharged and killed the child. Technology exists to make



JAC members canvassing in Highland Park for gun safety.

guns safer – including guns that only fire with a PIN number, biometric trigger locks, and more - but the gun lobby has blocked research and funding to implement it. Safe storage requirements, smart technology, higher regulation of gun dealers, prohibitions on guns for convicted domestic abusers are all regulations that a majority of Americans favor. Cars are safer today because of a comprehensive approach; we need the same approach for gun safety.

JAC has recently initiated a campaign against concealed carry in stores and restaurants in Highland Park, IL, where our office is located. Currently we have 107 businesses working to promote gun safety and protect our neighbors from gun violence.

SEPARATION *continued*

out to evangelical Christians by denouncing gay marriage and raising perceived threats to “religious liberty.” Estimates suggest that 17 million Evangelical voters did not turn out in 2012. Candidates are moving far to the right to get them out to the polls in early voting states in 2016. This puts gay marriage, abortion, birth control, and separation of religion and state in the cross hairs. (*Religion News 10/20/2015*)

A federal appeals court recently ruled against the Obamacare birth control mandate, which requires employer-based health plans to cover all federally-approved forms of birth control and emergency contraception, after four Christian nonprofits argued they should not have to provide contraception for their employees. These groups said even the religious exemption, which requires writing a letter to Dept. of Health and Human Services citing their objections, poses a substantial burden to their religious beliefs. Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL) called the court ruling a victory for the “rights of freedom and liberty critical to our founding fathers.” (*The Hill 10/18/2015*) The Obama administration believes that contraception accommodation strikes a proper balance between equal access to health care for women and protecting religious beliefs, and that the mandate will be upheld.

“...no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.”

Article VI, U.S. Constitution

On the left, religious groups are working together to mobilize their constituents to act on climate change, the refugee crisis, and gun violence. During his recent U.S. trip, Pope Francis urged Catholics to be stewards of the environment and address the effects of climate change. The Religious Action Center (RAC) is joining with many groups to help the thousands of Syrian refugees. Several groups have reached out to curb gun violence, especially following the horrifying church shooting in Charleston.

Government officials are not allowed to impose any religion on U.S. citizens. The government cannot mandate prayer or religious beliefs. But religious groups can work together to solve some of the biggest issues of our day. The key is to not infringe on the rights of those who don't share our beliefs – working to expand freedoms to all and not using one religious belief to restrict those freedoms. Together, we can continue to make the world a better place.

Research & Races



Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) is running for his second full term. Bennet was born in India, where his father was the aide to the US Ambassador. His maternal grandparents were Polish Jews who survived the Warsaw Ghetto. Bennet, who has a law degree from Yale, served as the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools before being appointed in 2009 to fill the Senate seat vacated by Ken Salazar, who went to work for the Obama Administration. Bennet is a strong voice on all of JAC's issues. He won his last race on his position on women's issues. The GOP has not picked an opponent to face Bennet, and this race is currently rated Lean Democratic. Bennet deserves JAC support.



Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) is running for the Senate seat currently occupied by Sen. Harry Reid, who is retiring after 30 years in the Senate. Cortez Masto served two terms as Nevada's Attorney General and became well known for her integrity and leadership. Cortez Masto says that she will be a firm ally of Israel; her trip to Israel showed her first-hand the importance of the U.S. commitment to her security. She is a strong believer in a woman's right to choose and will oppose efforts to criminalize abortion. Her opponent is anti-choice and anti-climate legislation. This race is a toss up and will need the support of JAC in order to keep this seat pro-choice.



Jason Kander is running against Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO). Kander, who is Jewish and 34, is a father, lawyer and army veteran. His opponent authored the anti-choice Blunt Amendment which would allow all employers to refuse contraception coverage in their insurance plans, if it violated the employer's religious beliefs. Kander is strong on women's issues including choice and equal pay. He is pro-Israel and understands the threats of violence in the Middle East. This is an uphill race, but deserving of JAC support.



Go to www.jacpac.org/donate to make contributions to JAC-supported candidates.

Stay informed at www.JACPAC.org

Voting Rights

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) was passed in 1965 to ensure that American citizens, regardless of race, have an equal right to vote. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a key provision of the VRA used to combat racial discrimination in voting. Over the years, state legislatures have made it harder for people to vote, frequently citing rampant “vote fraud.” Voting fraud is very rare – one study cites 31 instances nationwide out of over 1 billion ballots cast between 2000 and 2014 (*Washington Post* 8/6/14). Laws are being introduced to address the perceived problem. Unfortunately, these laws are instead preventing Americans from accessing the polls and impeding their right to have a voice in our democracy. (*Brennan Center for Justice*)

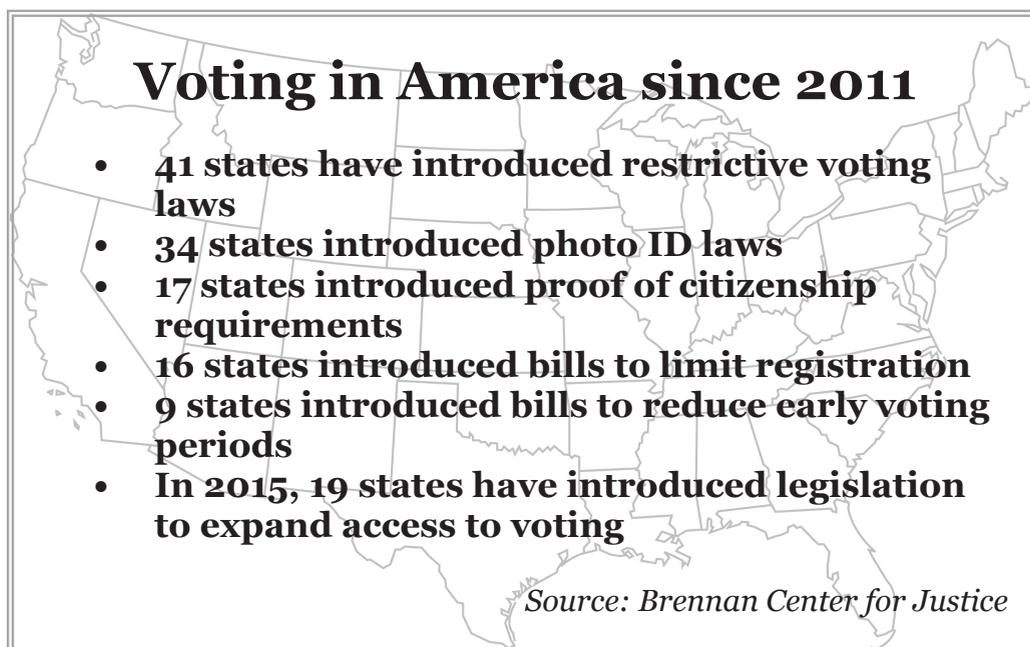
Access to the voting booth is largely determined by where you live. Since 2000, typically Democratic majority states tended to pass laws making it easier to register and vote, while states with a Republican majority have made it harder. Alabama recently planned to close 31 driver’s license facilities in rural, impoverished, majority black counties, making it even more difficult for residents to get state-approved ID for voting. Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL) notes that 250,000 eligible voters do not have proper ID, and she has joined the NAACP in saying the state is likely in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. (*Think Progress* 10/6/2015) Since the initial announcement, the state has announced many of these facilities will be open once a month to serve residents. (*Washington Post* 10/17/2015)

Other states, including Ohio, North Carolina, and Kansas have passed laws abolishing same-day voting and early voting, while requiring proof of citizenship that will keep thousands of eligible voters from the polls. On the other hand, California and Oregon have actually made it easier for people to register and vote. These states passing automatic registration for those requesting a driver’s license or state ID. (*LA Times* 10/20/2015)

Federal courts could ensure access to the ballot through the equal protection clause. States would need to prove that their onerous laws are preventing fraud and are not simply a way to keep certain citizens from the polls.

Hillary Clinton reminded voters that the Voting Rights Act was historically bipartisan, supported by both Democratic and Republican presidents for the last 60 years. She took Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) to task for “what’s the big deal” about voter ID laws, and chastised Gov. John Kasich (R-OH) for restricting early voting in Ohio, which disproportionately affects the black community. Clinton has proposed creating a national system that would automatically register all 18-year-olds and would set up a 20-day early voting apparatus. (*CBS News* 10/21/2015)

JAC knows, from traveling around the country, that voting is not equal across the country. In Illinois, voters can easily get to the polls, vote early, and use a variety of ID forms. In Florida, people wait in lines in some neighborhoods, without access to chairs or restrooms. Voting is a right of all Americans over the age of 18. It is critical to our democracy that everyone has easy access to this right. Money in politics amplifies some voices, but at the end of the day, the law is still one person, one vote. Elections matter and our vote needs to be protected.



It has been a busy couple of months around the country with JAC. Talking Points, meeting with and supporting candidates, canvassing for gun safety and being honored with the Irving B. Harris Spirit of Choice Award by Personal PAC for JAC's ongoing work to promote and protect women's reproductive rights.



Meeting with Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) in Chicago. (l to r: Bruce Balonick, Linda Rae Sher, Sen. Leahy, Dana Gordon, Hollis Wein, Marcia Balonick, Tina Stoll, Joy Malkus)



Talking Points featured Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-21) in Highland Park to discuss recent legislation and world events. (l to r: Rabbi Phyllis Sommer, Rep. Deutch, and Marcia Melamed)

JAC Around Town

Debbie Gitchell (r) delivering JAC support to Monica Vernon, candidate for Iowa's 1st Congressional district.



2015 Personal PAC Award Luncheon with fellow honoree Dr. Willie Parker and Personal PAC Director Terry Cosgrove. (l to r: Dana Gordon, Terry Cosgrove, Marcia Balonick, Dr. Willie Parker, Susan Berk, Barbara Bluhm-Kaul, Linda Rae Sher, Hollis Wein)

With Rep. Bill Foster (IL-11) and his daughter at a DCCC function in Chicago.



Presenting Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA-12) with a "JAC Gun Sense" shirt at a DCCC function in Chicago.



JAC Executive Director Marcia Balonick with Jill Weinberg and Nancy Kohn at Personal PAC luncheon.



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

Gidi Grinstein of the Reut Institute and our host, Tina Wolf for Talking Points HP.



Gidi Grinstein at Talking Points. (l to r: Janna Berk, Lisa Bookstein, Gidi Grinstein, Merle Styer)

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JAC Newsbreak is a monthly publication of JACPAC.
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Upcoming JAC Events

- **Talking Points Highland Park**, November 16th featuring Representative Jared Polis (CO-2)
- **Talking Points Los Angeles**, November 20th featuring Donna Crane of NARAL Pro-Choice America
- **Detroit Membership Meeting**, November 23rd featuring Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters (D-MI)

Want to host a JAC event in your area? Contact the JAC office.
847.433.5999 or info@jacpac.org

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