

Director's Outlook



Marcia Balonick

JAC has been in existence for over 30 years and we continue to fight for the issues of concern to the Jewish community. Some of those we supported when we began are still in Congress, and they work with some that are serving their first terms. Our membership around the country continues to stay involved, letting us know about the races in their areas.

As a grandmother of three beautiful granddaughters, I am determined to give them a world that has a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, women's reproductive rights and a true separation of religion and state. I also want them to live in a world where we work together to control gun violence and make changes to lessen the effects of climate change.

It is vital that Israel remain a bipartisan issue –both in our community and the Congress. We don't have to agree on every issue, but we should respect each other's views and work together to reinforce and strengthen the bonds between our countries. Although the Iran Deal has divided our community, we must remember that people on both sides of the deal are concerned with the safety and security of Israel, and want to decrease the risk of a nuclear Iran.

Women need to stand up for their reproductive rights. I grew up when abortion was illegal, and I can't imagine going back to that time—where laws put women's lives at stake. We must stay vigilant as anti-choice advocates are attempting to regulate every aspect of abortion and presidential candidates speak about forcing rape victims to give birth.

The environment is an issue that affects everyone, wherever they live. Weather changes, horrible storms, heat waves, and droughts affect our economy and our health. I want my granddaughters to live in a safe and beautiful world.

Thank you for being part of JAC. The next election is right around the corner and the issues couldn't be more critical. ❁

ELECTIONS MATTER

✡ Israel & the Middle East

This August recess is a very busy time for elected officials and the Jewish community because of the upcoming vote on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) regarding Iran. Opponents and supporters of the deal are heavily lobbying their members of Congress, emails are flying, and experts are speaking out. The White House is sending materials and officials to speak on the benefits of the deal, and opponents are sending out their members to alert the community as to the risks.

When Congress reconvenes in September, they will vote on whether or not to approve the deal. President Obama has promised to veto any Congressional defeat of the agreement. In order to support President Obama's position, and to uphold a potential veto, 34 Senators need to vote "yes" to keep the deal. To override the

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♀ Reproductive Rights

Recently, an edited video was released showing Planned Parenthood's medical director discussing the harvesting of tissue from fetuses. The conversation about harvesting tissue and organs from aborted fetuses has reopened the debate about abortion and the funding of Planned Parenthood. (*The Atlantic 7/2015*) Before Congress broke for summer recess, the Senate tried to halt Planned Parenthood funding for the 8th time since 2007. S1881 failed after Republicans were unable to find the 60 votes needed to overcome a Democratic filibuster. Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL) was the only Republican Senator opposing the bill.

Planned Parenthood acknowledges they receive legal remuneration for the tissue donation to cover the expense of the transfer to a medical research center. These payments have been legal since the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act of 1993, which prohibited the sale of human fetal tissue but allowed exchanges with

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⚖ Separation of Religion & State

Pharmacists in America can deny women contraception or abortion-inducing drugs if the pharmacists' personal religious beliefs prevent them from filling certain prescriptions. According to the ACLU, current law states that "A pharmacy or pharmacist's refusal to sell birth control does not violate a woman's federal constitutional rights. Although the constitution protects a woman's right to contraception, it does not ensure that women can access reproductive health services." (*Cosmopolitan 8/11/15*) This means that if a woman goes into a pharmacy to buy contraception, the "morning after" pill, or an abortifacient, the pharmacist can deny service. For women in small towns, or without time to go to another pharmacy, this is an unfair imposition and infringement on their reproductive needs.

Religious freedom laws affect many: women who need contraception, gay couples

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⌘ Beyond the Core

It seems that a week doesn't pass without another tragic story of a mass shooting — whether in a movie theater, church or army recruiting office. Yet there still seems to be a push across the country for more permissive gun laws and to expand gun-free zones. For instance, Texas state legislators are pushing for a measure to eliminate most gun-free zones in the state, including hospitals. (*KERA News 7/20/15*). Supporters argue that they need to carry a gun for safety, but a recent study in the *Journal of Preventive Medicine* finds that "defensive gun use" rarely protects a person from harm. It also finds that such incidents are much rarer than gun advocates

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

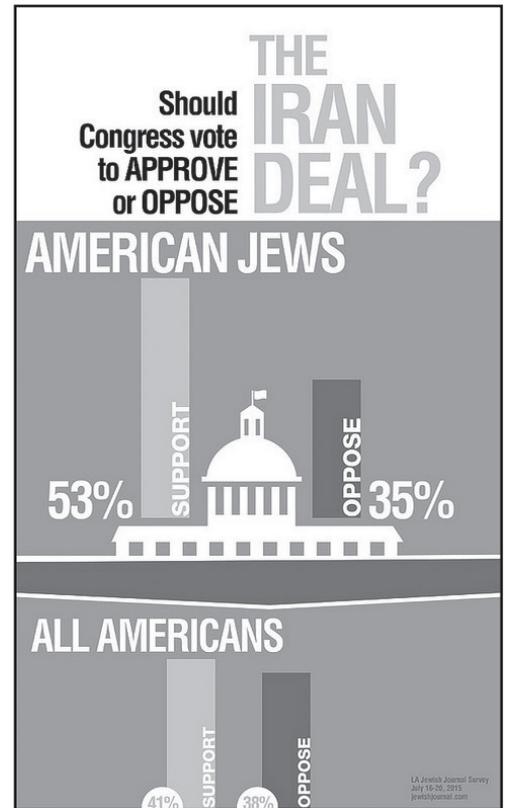
ISRAEL continued

promised presidential veto, 67 Senators would need to vote “no.” So far, as of publication, 31 Senators are leaning “yes” and 57 leaning “no,” leaving the remaining 12 votes subject to significant lobbying. (*Washington Post* 8/20/15)

President Obama stated in a recent interview that the central objective of his and previous administrations has been preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. He says that this deal achieves that goal by cutting off all the pathways for Iran to get a nuclear weapon in exchange for sanctions relief. (*NPR* 8/5/2015) In July, the U.S., along with the rest of the P5+1, reached a comprehensive plan of action. President Obama said, “that under its terms, Iran is never allowed to build a nuclear weapon. And while Iran, like any party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, is allowed to access peaceful nuclear energy, the agreement strictly defines the manner in which its nuclear program can proceed, ensuring that all pathways to a bomb are cut off.” When speaking of Israel, Obama said, “I believe the facts support this deal. I believe they are in America’s interest and Israel’s interest.” (*President Obama, American University speech* 8/5/15)

Opponents say that this deal is too dangerous because they believe Iran will cheat, the inspectors will not have full access to sites, and sanctions relief will provide Iran with the money needed to foment an increasing threat to Israel and her neighbors. Prime Minister Netanyahu has said, “And this deal will bring war. The nuclear deal with Iran doesn’t block Iran’s path to the bomb, it actually paves Iran’s path to the bomb...Iran can get to the bomb by keeping the deal or Iran can get to the bomb by violating the deal.” (*TheJC.com* 8/5/2015)

Many are concerned about the rampant anti-semitism by the leaders of Iran, and the danger posed to Israel. President Obama said that Iran must drop its anti-American and anti-Israel postures before it transitions into the international community. (*JTA* 8/10/15) In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, Obama acknowledged that the Supreme Leader of Iran is deeply anti-semitic and seeks to do great harm to Israel. (*The Atlantic* 8/11/2015)



As students prepare to go back to their universities for the fall term, the Jewish community is preparing for another onslaught of BDS – Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions. Last year the BDS movement became a significant problem for Jewish students on many campuses. Federations, Hillels and other groups are proactively training students and faculty about how to deal with anti-semitism and anti-Israel activities on campus.

JAC will continue to advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. Whatever the outcome when Congress votes, JAC will encourage the community to come together and work in a bipartisan fashion to stand with Israel. Israel continues to need Congressional support for military aid, support at the United Nations and ongoing cooperation between our governments. The longstanding and unbreakable relationship between these two close allies will continue.

SEPARATION continued

that want to receive services or buy goods, and students taught by teachers with a religious bias. In the U.S., the curriculum for sex education in schools has been driven largely by the Religious Right. Only 22 states mandate sex-ed and only 13 require that the information be medically accurate. Many state governments fund religion-based abstinence-only programs instead of teaching sex-ed in the classroom. In West Virginia, a local high school hired a speaker and advertised the event as a lesson on “God’s plan for purity.” We all know that students deserve access to real information that isn’t tainted by reactionary, dogmatic, and inaccurate claims. (*Americans United* 8/11/15)

The Colorado appeals court ruled against a bakery owner who said his own religious views prevented him from baking a cake for a gay couple. The judge ruled that the bakery could continue to espouse their religious beliefs, including opposition to same sex marriage. However, if they wanted to conduct business within the state they could not pick and choose customers based on their sexual orientation. (*Politico* 8/13/15)

Nationally, nine Federal agencies have proposed regulations reforming partnerships between the government and faith-based social service providers. According to Rev. Barry Lynn, Executive Director of Americans United, “these regulations will ensure that those who seek services won’t be kicked out of a homeless shelter or a drug treatment class because they don’t want to pray or listen to preaching.” (*Americans United* 8/5/15)

The recent Republican Presidential debate saw numerous mentions of God interspersed with policy discussion. This conversation about Jesus and religious beliefs in a national political forum makes many feel uncomfortable, regardless of their religious affiliation. This election season will keep us very busy on the subject of separation of religion and state.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS continued

“reasonable payments associated with the transportation, implantation, processing, preservation, quality control, or storage.” (GovTrack.US)

This most recent attack is dangerous because 90% of Planned Parenthood’s activities include vital health care services including cancer screenings, well care visits, contraception, pap smears, tests for sexually transmitted diseases, and breast exams. Over 78% of their clients are low-income, often living in areas where there are very few alternative health care providers. (Connecticut Courant, Richard Blumenthal, 8/10/15)

4.6 MILLION CLIENTS SERVED IN 2013

1 MILLION UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES IN 2013

345,000 ABORTIONS AVERTED IN 2013

TITLE X MAKES A DIFFERENCE

PREVENTED 87,000 PRETERM OR LOW-BIRTH-WEIGHT BIRTHS IN 2010

63,000 STIs IN 2010

2,000 CERVICAL CANCER CASES IN 2010

SAVED \$7 BILLION IN FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS IN 2010

\$7 SAVED FOR EVERY PUBLIC \$ INVESTED IN 2010

30% HIGHER Without Title X-funded family planning services in 2013, unintended pregnancy and abortion would be 30% higher

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Fetal tissue donation is legal in the United States and many members of Congress have voted to support this vital research. Both federal and state law support fetal tissue transfer and donation because, like organ and tissue donation generally, such donations are critical to medical advances that help everyone, including those who oppose abortion. (RH Reality Check 7/15/15)

Scientists have been using tissue and cells from aborted fetuses and miscarriages for decades to develop vaccines and seek treatments from ailments including vision loss, spinal cord injuries, cancer and AIDS. Fetal tissue was “absolutely critical” to the development of a potential Ebola vaccine that has shown promise, according to a leading doctor at the NIH. Most U.S. scientists say fetal tissue is essential for research. (US News 8/11/15)

Access to contraception is at stake, again. State and federal legislators are trying to enact laws that would allow employers, schools and pharmacists to deny these services to women. When governors and legislators deny funding for Title X or Medicaid expansion in their states, they raise the cost of birth control and interfere with a woman’s ability to use the appropriate contraceptive method. (New York Times 8/11/15)

This month the first Republican debates were held in Ohio. All candidates agreed on one thing – their anti-choice stance. Elections Matter. The next President will make appointments to the Supreme Court and will have the power to affect women’s reproductive choices. In the debate, Gov. Scott Walker (R-WI) reiterated his opposition to abortion even when the life of the mother is at stake. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) opposes rape and incest exemptions, believing that women who are raped should carry the fetus to term and put the baby up for adoption. (Mother Jones 8/6/15) Many of the GOP candidates are strong

supporters of personhood, which would make all abortions illegal.

Many of these issues will come up in Congress after the August recess and we must be vigilant. Phone calls and emails to our Representatives are vital to show our support for the rights of women and their reproductive choices. We must continue to demand these decisions are made by women—not Congress.

BEYOND THE CORE continued

claim. Owning a firearm does not give individuals any significant advantage in a criminal confrontation. (The Trace 7/14/15). Guns are often turned on the victim or someone in the home is accidentally injured with the gun. There are 300 million guns in the U.S.—nearly enough for each citizen to own one. (Mother Jones 7/8/15)

The shooting in a South Carolina church this summer renewed the debate over a national background check system. It has been 22 years since the Brady Bill, the nation’s first background check bill, became law. That law has been credited with stopping more than 2.1 million gun purchases to felons, those who were mentally ill, and to fugitives. But the program is not foolproof and guns do end up in the wrong hands. **Sen. Chuck Schumer** (D-NY) introduced legislation to close the loopholes that allowed the South Carolina shooter to obtain a gun. Schumer’s bill would create monetary rewards for states that submit all necessary records into the background check system and create penalties for states that do not. Schumer’s cousin, comedian and actress Amy Schumer, has joined the effort, following the recent theater shooting at a showing of her movie, Trainwreck. (ABC News 8/3/2015)

While legislators fight an uphill battle for sensible gun safety laws, the Oath Keepers, a fiercely anti-government, militaristic group, chose to make a public armed display in Missouri, claiming they were protecting businesses and property. Carrying assault-type weapons and wearing bullet-proof vests, they walked the streets in Ferguson, MO, during demonstrations commemorating the death of Michael Brown one year ago, inflaming an already-tense situation. JAC supports candidates who promote efforts to reduce gun violence and we will continue to push Congress to enact common sense gun legislation.

What is the gun policy on your kids' campus?

The Campaign to Keep

Guns Off

Campus

Research & Races



Russ Feingold (D-WI) will be challenging Ron Johnson (R-WI) to reclaim the Senate seat he held from 1993-2011. This race will pit one of the most conservative Senators against one of the most liberal. Feingold, who is Jewish, was a Harvard Law School graduate and Rhodes scholar. His primary focus was campaign finance reform, where he worked alongside Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) on the McCain-Feingold Act. He was also a strong advocate for fair trade policies, health care reform, environmental protection, foreign policy and civil liberties. We need Russ Feingold back in the Senate to protect JAC's issues.



Rep. **Patrick Murphy** (FL-18) is running for the open Senate seat being vacated by Marco Rubio (R-FL), who is running for President. Murphy defeated firebrand and former Rep. Allen West (R-FL) in a huge upset in 2012. Murphy has worked hard during his time in Congress; currently serving on the Financial Services and Intelligence committees. He recently co-sponsored the Affordability to Access Act, which would guarantee a woman's right to affordable birth control. He is solidly pro-Israel and is a strong voice for the U.S.-Israel relationship. This Senate race is a toss-up and will be one of the most expensive in the country.



JAC is excited once again to support **Ted Strickland**, who is running for the Senate in Ohio. Strickland served 12 years in Congress and was a strong advocate for JAC's issues. He also served as a governor fighting for middle class families. He is now running against an anti-choice incumbent who boasts a 0 percent rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America. Strickland has visited Israel several times and is committed to a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. He will be a much-needed voice for Israel, women and families in the Senate.

JAC Around Town

JAC's Linda Ruder and Evie Fisher at JAC Lunch for Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-36)



Meeting with Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz in Chicago. (l to r: Bruce Balonick, Steve Sheffey, Sec. Moniz, Barbara Slutsky, Marc Slutsky)



Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) in Martha's Vineyard with Lee Wolf & Betsy Sheerr



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

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Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs



www.JACPAC.org

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Meeting with White House Jewish Liaison Matt Nosanchuk. (l to r: Marcia Balonick, Joy Malkus, Matt Nosanchuk, Dana Gordon)



JAC women meeting with Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) (l to r: Dana Gordon, Susan Berk, Senator Hirono, Marcia Balonick, Linda Rae Sher)

Upcoming JAC Events

- **LA Steering Committee Meeting**, August 31st
Los Angeles, CA
- **Talking Points Highland Park**, September 21st
featuring Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-21)

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.