

JAC NewsBreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

February 23, 2010

On my mind this month...



Barbara Bluhm-Kaul

This is my last column as your President and I wanted to discuss one of our biggest pieces of unfinished business.

Abortion rights are fast becoming a contradiction in terms. For over two decades we have been advocating for full reproductive rights for women and we have seen those rights become a privilege for the few. In this year's health care debate, in order to get a bill in the House, a dreadful compromise had to be struck: health care for all, reproductive choice for none.

In Wichita, Kansas, Dr. George Tiller, a hero to women who most needed abortions, was murdered last year as he was attending church. The medical clinic that had been turned into a battle zone by right-to-life extremists, is shuttered. That leaves only one doctor left in the country who is skilled at late-term abortions and willing to perform them. Too bad he risks his life to do so.

I am fearful that *Roe v. Wade* is now up for grabs. The Supreme Court recently issued a decision that overturned established law from 100 years ago. The justices who issued the majority opinion had said in their Senate confirmation hearings that their judicial philosophy was to respect precedent. If *Roe* is challenged in court, will the same justices overturn this 38-year-old decision?

If JAC and legions of women had not worked so hard, would there even be a shred of abortion rights left? We will continue the work of electing pro-choice members of Congress and hold them accountable to be pro-choice even when the tough votes are taken.

Your new President, Gail Yamner, will be installed in DC next week. Congratulations, Gail, and I wish you the best of luck and success.

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✡ Israel

Negotiations, crippling economic sanctions, regime change, attack nuclear weapon sites, war, international agreements on isolating Iran. All of these techniques have been mentioned in the fight to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Iran recently told of its plans to build two new uranium enrichment facilities which they insist are meant for peaceful purposes. There is not yet a consensus in the United States or abroad on how to stop them.

The House and Senate have both passed their own versions of comprehensive Iran sanctions bills. The bills target Iran's energy refining apparatus. As of now, Iran does not have its own refining capabilities and depends on outside countries for their needs. These bills will be reconciled and sent to President Obama for signing. According to the *WSJ* (Feb 23, 2010) foreign investment in Iran is rapidly declining. German and British companies have terminated investments and sales with Iran. Other European countries are considering following suit, especially France.

When discussing the possibility of war as a way to deal with Iran, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in Dubai, said that the US has no plan for military action against Iran. However, Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff said that Washington has not ruled out military action and that the option remains on the table. Many believe that a pre-emptive strike would delay Iran's nuclear efforts but only for a couple of years. Some are depending on Israel to eliminate Iran's nukes, but Iran and other bad actors in the Middle East have promised retribution against Israelis and Americans if Israel strikes Iran.

How about regime change? Richard Haass, Pres of the Council on Foreign Relations, believes that a more moderate Iran would forgo a nuclear weapon, strengthen the moderates in

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🇺🇸 United States

CHOICE

The Catholic church may be more involved in the abortion issue than most of us know from reading our local newspapers, and even the *New York Times*, unless you live in Bakersfield, California. Earlier this month, on February 7, during the Latin Mass at St. Francis Church, Father Ralph Bellomini chose to "vary his normal sermon routine" and announced that "he was going to discuss Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's comments on abortion," as contained in a newspaper article which he held up for his congregants to see. Father Bellomini called Speaker Pelosi a "cafeteria Catholic," choosing to decide for herself what aspects of Catholic Doctrine she would follow. Speaker Pelosi is a practicing Catholic who supports choice. Father Bellomini went on to say that "abortion was contrary to the Sixth Commandment, Thou Shalt Not Kill," and Catholics are not free to choose what Church doctrines they accept. The *Bakersfield Californian* carried the news about Father Bellomini's Sunday gospel and the response from Ray Gonzalez, a former member of the California Assembly. Gonzalez stood up in church to confront the priest and tell the congregation that, although he was personally opposed to abortion, based on his faith, he did not feel that a legislator has the right to "impose Catholic Doctrine as a law on other citizens who may have another opinion." Bakersfield is not in Nancy Pelosi's district.

The Virginia state House and state Senate have both signed off on a pro-abortion license plate sponsored by Planned Parenthood. Now, there is a funding battle. The House approved an amendment to remove the funding from Planned Parenthood. The Senate approved the bill for the "Trust Women/Respect Choice" plates but kept the funding designated to Planned Parenthood. According to Victoria Cobb of the Family Foundation, "Court rulings have said if one viewpoint is allowed on a license

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Research & Races

SENATE

Illinois--The Illinois primary, the earliest in the nation, was held on February 2. Illinois Dem. state Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias will face GOP Rep. Mark Kirk for the seat previously held by President Barack Obama. Kirk is a moderate who received JAC support in the House, but recent votes on choice and separation moved him to the right. He is an outspoken supporter of Israel. Giannoulias has good position papers on Israel and separation and has been endorsed by Planned Parenthood. This race is likely to remain a "toss-up" until election day.

Indiana -- Dem. Senator Evan Bayh is not seeking a third term. Dem. Rep. Brad Ellsworth is running for his party's nomination and Dem. Rep. Baron Hill is still considering the race. Both Ellsworth and Hill are "blue-dog" Democrats with good records on Israel and mixed records on separation. Ellsworth is anti-choice; Hill's record is against funding and partial birth. The GOP field is also not final, but former Sen. Dan Coats has announced his intention to run. Bayh's decision moves the seat into the "lean GOP" column.

HOUSE

Florida -- St. Sen. Ted Deutch won the Democratic special primary in Florida's 19th district on February 2. JAC-supported Dem. Rep. Robert Wexler resigned from the House on January 3 to become the director of the Center for Middle East Peace. Deutch is expected to win the special general election on April 13. Unfortunately, he will have to run again in the August primary and the general in November but will definitely have the advantage of incumbency and JAC's support.

Hawaii -- Democratic Rep. Neil Abercrombie plans to resign at the end of February to campaign for Governor. This seat should not be a GOP opportunity, but a crowded field and hotly contested Democratic battle could give Honolulu City Councilman Charles Djou an opportunity to win with less than 50% of the vote. It is as good a scenario as Republicans could hope for in this Democratic state and district where President Obama was born.

Illinois (10) -- This is an Open seat. GOP Rep. Mark Kirk is running for

Senate. Democrat Dan Seals, who ran unsuccessfully for this seat twice, losing to Kirk with 46 and 47%, will face businessman Robert Dold. Seals has always been a strong candidate with good positions on JAC's issues. He will have JAC's support. Dold has not previously run for political office. He has a good position paper on Israel but has not furnished JAC with papers on either choice or separation. His office says he is "pro-choice," but against funding, for parental notification and parental consent, and favors the ban on "partial birth" abortion.

Illinois (14) -- JAC-supported Dem. Rep. Bill Foster will face GOP st. Sen. Randy Hultgren in November. Hultgren defeated attorney Ethan Hastert, son of the former Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert. This was a surprise win as Hastert had been ahead in the polls and in fundraising. Demographics in the district are changing to Foster's advantage as Democrats leave the city and move out to this district. Foster has only held this seat for less than three years. It will still be a tough campaign in a district that was represented by a Republican for more than a decade.

Right Wing Watch

What is the Tea Party Movement? The name is obvious - the most famous antigovernment insurrection in American history, the Boston Tea Party of December 1773. Tea Party groups have taken roots across the country. The latest CBS News/New York Times poll says that approximately 1 in 5 adult Americans identifies with the Tea Party Movement. The movement claimed its first victory last month when Republican Scott Brown won the Massachusetts Senate seat previously

held by Dem. Sen. Ted Kennedy. (After Brown's vote yesterday to support the Administration's jobs bill, the Tea Party movement may drop the newest Senator). Tea Partiers are conservative and angry, defined less by what they are for than what they oppose: big government and big government spending, especially bailouts and stimulus packages, high taxation and large deficits. They also oppose immigration, but many are strong libertarians and anties-establishment. They are working against

"moderates" in the Republican Party, exemplified by their support of Marco Rubio in Florida against the state's popular governor, Charlie Crist. Crist made the mistake of speaking positively about the President's stimulus package. Keep an eye on the upcoming primaries - Texas is March 2. If the Tea Party movement can bring out its voters, the GOP nominees are likely to be from the right wing of the Republican Party, or you could see many more Independent candidates.

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plate another viewpoint must also be allowed, but it does not address the funding aspects of the license plates. Choose life plates are available in 20 states at this time. 520,000 Choose

Life plates have been sold since 2002 and have raised an estimated \$11 million for pregnancy centers and adoption agencies. Abortion advocates are putting their own plate together hoping

to gain similar financial benefits. But, Montana and Pennsylvania have pro-abortion plates and only 22 people in Pennsylvania have purchased the one sponsored by Planned Parenthood.

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the West Bank and Gaza in order to achieve peace with Israel, and work with Turkey and Syria to rethink their own foreign policy. Haass believes that the world would be safer if this political change could occur, then this

new government could emerge as a country at peace with itself and its neighbors. Obama started his presidency saying that he was willing to negotiate with Iran and many countries have seen how these negotiations have

not worked. Iran needs to be stopped before it becomes more of a threat to the entire world. The damage created by Iran's going nuclear could become catastrophic. (*Washington Post* 2/13/2010)