

JAC NewsBreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

April 23, 2008

On my mind this month...



Hon. Amy N. Dean

Down here in the Florida outback we have a couple of very interesting races. The fact that they present an opportunity for a referendum, if not total change, in the traditional politics of South Florida is seemingly of little interest to many. Why? It is my belief that we are all beginning to suffer from a political weariness.

Perhaps all the races started too early and thus have gone on too long. Whatever the cause, I sense that the energy levels of many activists are decreasing dramatically. So, my friends, what is to be done?

We must continue in our work to support the candidates who are there for us on our issues. A failure to be vigilant can have devastating results. Case in point – the Florida legislature will actually entertain the suggestion that a license plate be created which says “I Believe” and has a multi-colored cross in front of a stained glass window. (I guess the multi colored part is for the fashionably unconstitutional). Apparently no one has told the distinguished members of the Florida legislature that there really is a constitutionally mandated separation between religion and state. They seem to have missed that Civics class.

I'm sure each of us can look around at what is happening in our localities and can see equally appalling efforts to undermine the freedoms we hold dear. So, stand up, stretch, shake off the ennui and let's get back in the ring until November.

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✪ Israel

On April 17, U.S. Reps. Shelley Berkley (D-NV) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced H.Res.1110 condemning Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization responsible for the murders of 26 American citizens. It calls on Hamas to renounce terrorism, fully disarm and recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, and reaffirms Congress' strong support for Israel's right to defend her citizens against Hamas terrorism. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and had 57 sponsors as of April 22. Call your Representative and ask him or her to cosponsor this resolution. Capitol switchboard: 202-224-3121.

Former President Jimmy Carter recently traveled to the Middle East, visiting Israel and Syria. Carter went to Damascus to meet with Hamas' political leader, Khalid Mashaal, against the advice of the Bush Administration and the U.S. State Department. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert objected to the visit and he and his cabinet refused to meet with Carter. When Carter returned from Damascus and spoke in Jerusalem on April 21, he read what he said was a direct statement from Hamas saying that they would accept a Palestinian state based on 1967 borders, if such a state were approved by the Palestinian people. However, within a matter of hours, Mashaal convened a news conference to distance himself from Carter's words and outlined several conditions - the removal of Israeli homes from the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, the full right of return for all Palestinian refugees, a refusal to ever negotiate with Israelis and a refusal to ever recognize the Israeli state. (The MidEast News Source 4/22/08)

According to the Jerusalem Post (4/22/08), Hamas has “softened its demand for a ceasefire.” The group is now prepared for a partial truce that would only include the Gaza Strip.” In return, Hamas wants Israel and

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🇺🇸 United States

CHOICE

Over a year ago, a bill aimed at reducing unwanted pregnancies was introduced in the Ohio House and Senate. The Senate version of the Ohio Prevention First Act has had one hearing. A companion bill in the House has had none. On April 9, advocates from NARAL, Planned Parenthood and other supporters went to the Ohio State house to push for hearings and a vote on the bills. Their visit came a day after Ohio Right to Life deposited “truth packets” on legislators desks. Ohio GOP Rep. Jon M. Peterson, who joined two Democrats to cosponsor the bill, said it should not be controversial. “We’re talking about preventing unwanted pregnancies...I am absolutely convinced the way to move responsibly down that road is through education.” The bill would require comprehensive sex education classes, require health insurance companies to cover birth control, require hospitals to provide emergency contraception for sexual-assault victims, and provide \$1.7 million for family planning services. Opponents dispute that increasing access to contraception will reduce abortions and unwanted pregnancies. Ohio ranks 44th among all states and the District of Columbia for public funding of contraceptive services.

Research findings continue to show that abstinence-only education does not reduce unintended pregnancy rates and, what is just as important, is causing an increase in sexually transmitted disease among teens. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported, last month, that one in four teen girls (approximately 3 million) is infected with a sexually transmitted disease. This study followed the CDC's December announcement that teen birth rates rose in 2006 for the first time in 14 years. Last year, Washington State passed the Healthy Youth Act, which takes effect in September 2008. School districts must now either teach comprehensive

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Research & Races

The newest member of the House of Representatives is Dem. **Jackie Speier**, elected on April 8, to fill the seat of the late Rep. **Tom Lantos** (CA-12). Speier won enough votes to avoid a runoff. She was sworn in the next day. Speier worked for then-Rep. Leo Ryan and was with him in Guyana when he was murdered during the People's Temple cult massacre in 1979. She ran for Ryan's seat, but was defeated. After losing, Speier went on to win a seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, from there to the state Assembly and in 1998, to the state Senate. Speier attended a JAC meeting in Burlingame in January.

SENATE UPDATE

New Jersey - Dem. Sen. **Frank Lautenberg** is facing a primary challenge from Rep. Rob Andrews. Lautenberg will be 84 when he runs in November. Andrews, age 50, has made age the principle issue in his campaign. Lautenberg, accompanied by his wife Bonnie, spoke at the JAC conference in March. His age doesn't appear to be holding him back, and JAC continues to support the Senator. Lautenberg has the support of Gov. Jon Corzine, the state's Democratic chairman and the rest of the New Jersey legislative delegation.

HOUSE: OPEN SEATS

Twenty-three House members are retiring: 20 Republicans and 3 Democrats. One Republican House member, Kenny Hulshof in Missouri, is running for Governor. Two Republicans and four Democrats are running for the Senate. Reps. Steve Pearce and Heather Wilson are both seeking

the GOP Senate nomination in New Mexico. Democrats Tom Allen in Maine, Rob Andrews in New Jersey, **Tom Udall** in New Mexico and **Mark Udall** in Colorado are seeking Senate seats. GOP Reps. Duncan Hunter (CA) and Tom Tancredo (CO) both ran for President and are not seeking reelection to the House. GOP Rep. Wayne Gilchrest was defeated in the Maryland primary as was Dem. Rep. Albert Wynn. Seven House members have died during the 110th Congress. Four have resigned. One, GOP Rep. Bobby Jindal, was elected Governor of Louisiana and another, GOP Rep. Roger Wicker, was appointed to fill the Senate seat vacated by GOP Sen. Trent Lott (MS).

JAC is, or could be, interested in the following open seats, i.e. seats where there is no incumbent. JAC gives these races a high priority because they are considered more opportune for the opposing party to take over than those featuring a challenge to an incumbent. When making our decisions, we consider position papers or voting records, demographics, past election results in the districts, and whether the race is winnable by the candidate that meets JAC's criteria.

AZ-01 - The Arizona filing deadline is June 4 and the primary is set for September 2, so it is too early to know who the nominees will be. This district was drawn as a swing district but favors Democrats. However, in 2002, Democrats nominated a flawed candidate, and GOP Rep. Rick Renzi took the seat. Renzi is under investigation on ethics charges and is resigning.

This race will be a "toss-up."

CO-02 - This seat has been held by Dem. Rep. **Mark Udall** for 10 years and favors Democrats. Colorado's filing is May 29. Three Democrats are mentioned, including st. Sen. Pres. Joan FitzGerald who would be a strong candidate. As of this date, no one has contacted JAC.

IL-11 - JAC is supporting st. Sen. Maj. Leader **Debbie Halvorson**. Halvorson's Republican opponent, chosen in the February 5th Illinois primary, has withdrawn. Republican chairmen from each county will choose the new nominee.

ME-01 - Dem. Rep. Tom Allen is running for the Senate. History and demographics favor the Democrats, but Maine Republicans often meet JAC's criteria. Six Democrats and two Republicans have filed. Maine's primary is June 10. JAC has not had contact with any of the candidates.

NJ-01 - This race just became Open, when Dem. Rep. Rob Andrews filed for the Senate. This is another district where history and demographics favor the Democrats. Four Democrats, including Rep. Andrews' wife, and two Republicans filed as soon as Andrews declared for the Senate.

NJ-03 - JAC is in this race with st. Sen. John Adler. There are three Republicans seeking the GOP nomination which will be decided on June 3rd. Adler has good name ID and a head start in fundraising. This remains a "toss-up."

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sex education programs or stop their sex education programs altogether. The comprehensive programs will be age-appropriate, medically accurate and include abstinence as a option. The programs will require teachers to

provide information about how STDs are transmitted, the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods and local resources for testing and medical care. "When sex education isn't comprehensive, it is

the students who pay the price." Prior to the passage of the Healthy Youth Act, more than 300 students rallied in Olympia, the state capitol, in support of the bill. (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 4/2/08)

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Egypt to open their trade and passenger crossings with Gaza. These have been sealed since Hamas took control last June. The proposal has been relayed through Egyptian mediators and Hamas spokesman, Ghazi Hamad, says they are waiting for Israeli's response.

The United States has agreed to Israel's request to connect it to the U.S. ballistic missile early warning system. The system was first used by Israel in 1991 when Iraq fired dozens of Scud missiles at Israel. The latest request was made to defend the state against a

possible attack from Iran. Iranian missiles are able strike anywhere in Israel and in recent weeks, U.N. nuclear experts have obtained documents detailing Iran's efforts to develop nuclear warheads for those missiles.