

Please help candidates for US Senate win in November. See page 2.

JAC NewsBreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

May 19, 2008

On my mind this month...



Hon. Amy N. Dean

Every month I am asked to write my thoughts for the Newsbreak. Frankly, this time around I found myself

spent and without any issues that seemed to move me. Somewhat amazing for someone who has an opinion about anything especially when it's not solicited!

Of course this didn't last long...

Friends, we need to refocus our efforts for our Congressional candidates. I know, I know – I've been harping on this in one form or another for months, but they truly have become the step-child of this election season. Presidential politics have kept us all seriously diverted. We need to support our House and Senate candidates because the issues we care about will be addressed not only in the White House, but in the Congress.

If you commit to hosting an event for a JAC-endorsed candidate, it can be done under the auspices of JAC. Both you and the organization benefit. Any monies raised at a JAC-sponsored fundraiser are attributed to you *and* the PAC. Each of us has someone who needs our help in our communities. Each of us knows of a candidate who will support our agenda or who is already doing so, but who could use the acknowledgment and assistance.

Please consider this option to support JAC. The office will assist you in every way, so please call 847 433-5999 or email marciabalonick@jacpac.org By the way, thank you for all you do,

JAC NEWSbreak, for JAC Leadership Circle, is a monthly publication of JACPAC.
Writer: Joy Malkus
President: Hon. Amy N. Dean
Executive Director: Marcia Balonick
Tel (847) 433-5999 Fax (847) 433-6194
Email jacpac123@aol.com
Web www.jacpac.org © JAC 2008

Israel

As U.S. President George W. Bush and Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert were meeting in Jerusalem, Islamic Jihad launched a rocket at a crowded shopping mall in Ashkelon. Paramedics confirmed that 14 people were wounded in the attack, three of them seriously. The IDF said the rocket was launched from Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza, a frequent base for rocket attacks. Witnesses said a siren meant to warn people to take cover did not sound before the rocket slammed into the mall. Israel believes Islamic Jihad is getting the rockets from Iran. At the end of the talks, Olmert said, "we will not be able to tolerate continuous attacks on innocent civilians." A government official told Channel Two that Bush's visit "won't prevent an immediate Israeli response...we are on a certain path of an extensive military confrontation with Hamas." Defense Minister Ehud Barak invited visiting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to visit the scene of the attack with him. (*Jerusalem Post* online 5/14/08)

According to the JTA, Israel and Syria "appear to be edging closer to a peace deal." Both Prime Minister Olmert and Syrian President Bashar Assad have publicly stated that they are ready to talk. Turkey has been accepted as a mediator by both sides. Assad told former President Jimmy Carter during his recent visit to Damascus that "85% of the issues between Syria and Israel have been resolved." Both Israel and Syria believe that a new U.S. president "may be ready to invest in an Israel-Syria peace deal, primarily to detach Syria from an alliance with Iran." The Bush administration did not take the necessary steps to encourage talks. "Israeli players and analysts agree that Washington holds the key. The only way Syria can be induced to sever its close military, diplomatic and economic ties with Iran is if it receives a better offer from the West -- an offer, only the United States can make."

United States

CHOICE

The anti-abortion group, Colorado for Equal Rights, announced on May 9, that it has secured over the 76,047 signatures necessary to put a "personhood initiative" on the November presidential ballot. The initiative would amend the state constitution to declare a fertilized egg a "person" who enjoys "inalienable rights, equality of justice, and due process of law." If passed, the amendment would pose a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*. Colorado has traditionally been conservative but has not had a history of restricting abortion access. And, also in November, voters in South Dakota will again be asked to consider a bill that would have the strictest limits on abortion in the country. The proposed law has exceptions for rape and incest but requires law enforcement authorities to be notified, and the exception for a mother's health would require extensive documentation from doctors who would be under risk of felony charges. Opponents of abortion in South Dakota are hoping for a court challenge.

Governors of 17 states have now rejected federal Title V funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. The Illinois Reproductive Justice and Access Act has been introduced in the Illinois House of Representatives. This bill would ensure access to reproductive health care and services, which includes comprehensive sex education. Supporters are urging the Governor to make Illinois the 18th state to reject abstinence-only-until-marriage funds.

SEPARATION OF RELIGION AND STATE

The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) has announced an initiative that will "equip, protect, and defend pastors who wish to exercise their First Amendment right to openly discuss the positions of political candidates and other moral and social issues from the pulpit." Participating pas-

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Research & Races

While the nation is focused on the presidential race, it is not the only game in town. If you care about Israel, choice, the war in Iraq, health care, the economy, education, the environment, energy and building a brighter future, the US Senate has enormous influence. Presented below are hotly contested US Senate races featuring JAC-supported candidates who need your help. (Next month: key House races.)

Sen. **Susan Collins** (ME) is an important moderate voice in the GOP. In the '06 election, Republicans, Northeastern moderates included, took a drubbing. As a result Senate Republicans with few exceptions are a far-right group. We supported Collins in her three prior campaigns. We will stick with this senator who has always been strong on our issues. She has a serious challenge from Rep. Tom Allen.

Democrat **Al Franken** (MN) is trying to unseat first-term GOP Senator Norm Coleman. The comedian has proven that he is serious about this race and poll numbers show a virtual tie. There are six Democrats in the Minnesota eight-member House delegation and freshman Senator Amy Klobuchar (D) won with 58% in 2006. The state is returning to its blue tradition, but it difficult to unseat an incumbent.

Senator **Mary Landrieu** (LA) is ranked the most vulnerable Democrat up for re-election. Landrieu has worked tirelessly to reconstruct Louisiana, but the demographics do not work in her favor: in the wake of Hurricane Katrina many of her supporters left and never returned. Her

declared opponent, state treasurer and former Democrat John Kennedy, switched parties to run against her. He has drawn primary opposition from conservative businessman Paul Hollis. Kennedy could be forced to spend crucial campaign funds and move his message to the right.

Senator **Frank Lautenberg** (D-NJ) looks to be the favorite in his bid for re-election to a fifth term, but he has drawn a primary challenge from Congressman Tom Andrews. Lautenberg, long supported by JAC, is a strong friend to the Jewish community and is perfect on our issues. While this primary challenge is viewed with disdain by party regulars, Lautenberg needs to take this seriously.

Democratic Rep. **Tom Udall** (NM) is running for the open seat now held by GOP Senator Pete Domenici. Udall is a former two-term state attorney general with high name identification and good approval ratings. The strong support of Governor Bill Richardson will help. But Domenici has been New Mexico's senior senator for 36 years, so a Republican victory is not impossible. Udall will face the winner of the June 3 GOP primary - Rep. Heather

Wilson or Rep. Steve Pearce. All three of the state's House members are running for the Senate.

Tom Udall's cousin, Rep. **Mark Udall** (CO) is running for the open seat in Colorado. Colorado is a more conservative state than New Mexico, so this could be a tougher race. Democrat Udall has a left-of-center record and comes from a solidly Democratic district. He will face former GOP Rep. Bob Schaffer, who has proven himself to be an effective fundraiser. Although Schaffer has a conservative record from his time in the House, he has been able to pull together the moderate and conservative wings of the party. Republicans are taking aim at Udall and are hoping for a victory.

There are two races to watch, but JAC is not ready to jump in. (1) Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich (D) is challenging 7-term GOP Senator Ted Stevens. Stevens, 85, delivers federal dollars for his state, but is under an ethics cloud. (2) Senator Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) faces a challenge from state Senator Kay Hagan.

(candidate form at the bottom of the page)

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tors have prepared sermons on this initiative and will deliver them on September 28. In 1954, the tax code was amended to add the threat of IRS action against churches if their pastors mentioned the positions of specific candidates from the pulpit. Prior to

that time, churches could evaluate the positions of political candidates without IRS intervention. ADF legal counsel Erik Stanley says, "the government can't demand that a church give up its right to tax-exempt status simply because the pastor exercises his

First Amendment rights in the pulpit... pastors have the right to speak about biblical values from the pulpit without fear of punishment...the number of threats being reported to ADF is growing...there is an aggressive campaign to unlawfully silence the church."

Yes, I will contribute to these campaigns and help JAC candidates win in November!

\$ _____ Collins for Senator \$ _____ Lautenberg for Senate
\$ _____ Al Franken for US Senate \$ _____ Tom Udall for us All
\$ _____ Friends of Mary Landrieu \$ _____ Mark Udall for US Senate
\$ _____ Enclosed is a donation to JAC to be allocated to candidates
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Mail this form and your contributions to JAC, P.O. Box 105, Highland Park, IL 60035, or fax this form with credit card payment to 847 433-6194, or visit the JAC website www.jacpac.org.

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