

JAC NewsBreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

June 23, 2008

On my mind this month...



Hon. Amy N. Dean

Since we now seem to have closure on the Presidential primary season, it appears that the media are now musing about what will happen with the “women’s” vote. It would seem that there is concern as to whom we will support this November.

I certainly understand the disappointment those of us who supported Senator Clinton feel right now. I am still recovering from the blatant sexism we all saw in the coverage of her campaign. However, I, for one, do not share the concerns of any pundit, strategist (or candidate, for that matter) as to where women will be this Fall.

Where can we be? If you are committed to reproductive choice – Senator Obama is the one for the job. If you are dedicated to separation of religion and state – clearly Senator Obama is the choice. If you desire a safe and secure Israel, do not let the gossip mongers and swift boaters sell you nonsense – Senator Obama is there on this issue as well.

Now is not the time to focus on whether our candidate succeeded. Now is the time to put our energies behind the candidate who will stand up for the ideals we share. JAC has endorsed Senator Obama and we should all work to ensure his success.

In the coming months we will also advise you of the candidates we support for the House and Senate. Please be generous in your support for them as well.

✧ Israel

A six-month ceasefire, brokered by Egypt, between Israel and Hamas, took effect on Thursday, June 19. Israel agreed to gradually loosen its blockade on Gaza, increasing the supply of food, fuel and other goods. Hamas has said it will order Palestinian militant groups to stop firing rockets into Israel, giving the residents of Sderot and communities in the Western Negev relief from daily rocket attacks. Egypt has pledged to monitor the border; Hamas will control the Rafah crossing. According to the Arab press, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will travel to Gaza in the coming days – the first time since Hamas’ takeover – to effect reconciliation between Hamas and the PA. If quiet is maintained in the south, Israel will be required to extend the truce to the West Bank at the end of the six months. Negotiations for the release of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit will be discussed separately from the truce. Freeing of Shalit will involve Israel’s agreement to release a large number of Palestinian prisoners. (*Ha’aretz* 6/18/08). The ceasefire news was followed by two other breaking news items. (1) French President Sarkozy announced a possible meeting between President Assad of Syria and Prime Minister Olmert when both are in Paris for Bastille Day July 14th. (2) Israel offered to begin peace talks with Lebanon. In an interview with BBC Arabic, Prime Minister Olmert said Israel is “ready to make major concessions on the redrawing of its borders in an effort to secure peace with the Palestinians and Syria.” He declined to elaborate.

A letter to President Bush authored by Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Roy Blunt (R-MO), Howard Berman (D-CA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) asserts key principles of U.S. efforts to help Israel achieve peace. It reiterates Israel’s “right to self defense, calls on the U.S. to stand strongly with Israel at the U.N.” and urges President Bush to do more to press Arab states to support peace negotiations. The letter currently has 201 signers.

🇺🇸 United States

CHOICE

Pro-life pharmacists are now being served by the website PFLI.org. “All the pro-life pharmacy news and information that is fit to print” shows up on PFLI.org. Karen Bauer, president of Pharmacists for Life International, says her organization promotes a pharmacist’s right to refuse to fill such prescriptions. The website lists seven pharmacies around the country that have signed a pledge to follow “pro-life” guidelines. According to the *Washington Post* (6/18/08), some pro-life pharmacies appear to be ordinary drug stores except that they do not stock some or all forms of contraception. Others also refuse to sell tobacco or pornography. Many offer alternative products, such as homeopathic and herbal remedies. “We try to practice pharmacy in a way that we feel is best to help our community and promote healthy lifestyles,” said Lloyd Duplantis, who owns Lloyd’s Remedies in Gray, LA, and is a deacon in his Catholic church. “After researching the science behind steroidal contraceptives, I decided they could hurt the woman and possibly hurt her unborn child. I decided to opt out.” This August, a DMC Pharmacy is scheduled to open in Chantilly, Virginia. The shelves will be stocked with almost everything sold in any drugstore, but anyone who wants condoms, birth control pills or the Plan B emergency contraceptive will have to go elsewhere. DMC or Divine Mercy Care in Fairfax is a nonprofit healthcare organization that adheres to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The group runs the Tepeyac Family Center, an obstetrics-gynecology practice in Fairfax that offers only “natural family planning,” as the only method of birth control. Critics of “pro-life” pharmacies worry that women seeking contraceptives at such a store could be humiliated or waste precious time if they are needing the morning-after-pill. “We may find ourselves with whole regions of the country where virtually every pharmacy follows these limiting,

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Research & Races

When making direct contributions to Congressional races in both the Senate and the House, JAC considers voting records, leadership positions, committee assignments and vulnerability when looking at incumbents; position papers and viability when looking at challengers or open seat candidates. This year, there are more good candidates than the PAC will be able to support. We want you to know who these candidates are and we hope you will consider supporting their campaigns through JAC. At the same time, we will continue to inform you about the candidates the PAC is directly supporting who also need your individual contributions. These lists will be updated every month. Please contribute to the following candidates and mail your checks to JAC, P.O. Box 105, Highland Park, IL 60035 or donate online www.jacpac.org.

HOUSE ENDORSEMENTS

Alaska -- State House Minority Leader Ethan Berkowitz is running for Alaska's at-large House seat. Alaska's incumbent member is GOP Rep. Don Young who faces a primary challenge from Lt. Gov. Sean Parnell. Berkowitz was a state prosecutor for 3 years, served in the Alaska legislature for 10 years and was the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor in 2006. **Berkowitz for Congress.**

Florida -- Raul Martinez was the mayor of Hialeah for 24 years and is known for getting things done, especially in the areas of health care and affordable housing. Republicans have had a lock on Cuban loyalties in Florida, but that dominance may be weakening. Democratic voter registration is up. He is challenging GOP Rep. Lincoln Diaz Balart who has not faced serious competition since first elected 16 years ago. **Raul Martinez for Congress.**

Michigan -- Michigan State Lottery Commissioner Gary Peters served in the Michigan Senate from 1995

to 2002 and was a leader in education reform. He has successfully run organizations and managed budgets as an executive in the private and public sectors. He is challenging GOP Rep. Joe Knollenberg who won reelection in 2006 with only 51%. This district is considered a strong takeover opportunity. **Peters for Congress.**

Missouri -- Kay Barnes was the first woman to be elected mayor of Kansas City, the largest city in Missouri. She was rated by the media and other independent observers as one of the best Mayors in the city's history, having brought economic development to the area before being term limited out of office in 2007. She faces GOP Rep. Sam Graves in November. **Kay for Congress.**

New Jersey -- New Jersey State Assemblywoman Linda Stender ran for this seat in '06 and held GOP Rep. Mike Ferguson to 49.4%. Ferguson is retiring and Stender is running again on a record of legislative accomplishments and almost two decades of serving her community in elective office.

She will face GOP state Senator Leonard Lance. **Linda Stender for Congress.**

New Mexico -- The *Albuquerque Tribune* says "Martin Heinrich is exactly the kind of young, articulate, issue-oriented and tough-minded candidate that the party will need." Heinrich is running for the open seat in New Mexico's 1st district, vacated by GOP Rep. Heather Wilson, who lost the primary for the state's open Senate seat. Heinrich will face Bernalillo County Sheriff Darren White. **Heinrich for Congress.**

Pennsylvania -- Attorney Siobahn "Sam" Bennett is challenging GOP Rep. Charlie Dent, who won his 2nd term with only 53% in a district that went for Gore in 2000 and Kerry in '04. Dems turned two Pennsylvania districts in '06 and hope to turn the 15th in '08. Sam Bennett is the candidate to make that happen and her momentum is building. She promises to bring fresh ideas to Congress, "For the sake of the next generation, we need a new way of doing things." **Sam Bennett for Congress.**

SEPARATION OF RELIGION AND STATE

South Carolina will be the first state to offer license plates that say "I Believe" and are adorned with a Christian cross over a stained-glass window. The bill authorizing the plate passed the State House and Senate unanimously on May 22nd and became law without the signature of Republican Gov. Mark Sanford. "While I do, in fact, 'believe,' it is my personal view that the largest proclamation of one's faith ought to be in how one lives one's life," Gov. Sanford wrote in a letter to the president pro tem of the state Senate. The bill, as passed, directs the Motor Vehicles Department to create the plate. The Governor told the department to charge

people just enough to reimburse the state for the cost to produce the plate and to not allow any organization to benefit from its sales. The state offers 200 other specialty plates, supporting organizations like colleges, sororities and the Boy Scouts. The state charges \$70 for those plates and sends the profit to the sponsor. The Motor Vehicles Department estimates that the "I Believe" plates will cost approximately \$4 to \$6 to produce. There is a proposal in Florida for a license plate almost identical to the one now available in South Carolina. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial services and

General Government has approved the extension of a school voucher program for D.C. schools. The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program has an annual budget of \$15 million, provides 1,900 vouchers up to \$7,500 to 2,000 low-income students for tuition and fees to attend private schools. Eleanor Holmes Norton, the district's nonvoting member opposes the program. In a 2007 letter to the *Washington Post*, Norton wrote that "the voucher scheme was imposed against the will of the majority of elected officials and residents." District voters have long opposed vouchers for religious and other private schools.

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discriminatory policies and women are unable to access legal, physician-prescribed medications," said R. Alta Charo, a University of Wisconsin lawyer and bioethicist. "We're talking about creating a separate universe

of pharmacies that puts women at a disadvantage." California, New Jersey, Illinois and Washington State recently began requiring pharmacies to fill all prescriptions or help women fill them elsewhere, and several other states

are considering such requirements. Virginia does not have any laws or regulations that would prohibit a pro-life pharmacy, and is not considering adopting any, according to the Virginia Board of Pharmacy.