

JAC NewsBreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

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On my mind this month...



Barbara Bluhm-Kaul

If anti-choice lawmakers have their way, pretty soon only a select wealthy few will have access to abortion. Since 1976,

the Hyde amendment forbade Medicaid — a program for poor people which had, up till then, paid for about 300,000 abortions a year — from using any federal money to pay for the procedure. The ban has been in place ever since.

Included in health care reform legislation being worked on by three committees in the House, Americans earning up to 400% of the poverty level — \$43,000 for an individual; \$88,000 for a family of four — would be eligible for government subsidies to help them purchase health insurance. If anti-choice legislators get their way, those subsidies could not be used to purchase a policy that has abortion coverage. For many women, that would mean giving up a benefit they now have under their private insurance policies. (Nearly 90% of insurers currently cover abortion procedures.)

The more extreme anti-choicers in Congress oppose birth control and stem cell research. They will try to put bans on the table as “compromises” necessary for the passage of health care reform.

Women’s reproductive health options have already been compromised. They are in danger of being limited even further. Please contact your representative and senators and tell them you oppose any restrictions on women’s reproductive health care options in upcoming reform legislation. They can be reached through the capitol switchboard 202 224-3121.

Israel

On July 21, the Senate, by voice vote, urged President Obama to “tighten sanctions against Iran if Tehran fails to halt its nuclear program by late 2009.” The measure was introduced by Senators Evan Bayh (D-IN), Jon Kyl (R-AZ), John McCain (R-AZ) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and was attached as an amendment to the 2010 Defense Department Appropriations bill. “Whether one believes engaging directly with the regime in Tehran will accomplish anything, there is no question that time is of the essence,” Kyl said. “Every day that passes is time that the Iranians use to perfect a nuclear weapon and stockpile nuclear weapons material.” House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard Berman followed on Wednesday telling Reuters that he would move forward with legislation in the fall that seeks to cut off gasoline exports to Iran if the Obama administration’s engagement efforts fail to persuade the Iranian government to halt its nuclear program. “I view this bill as a ‘sword of Damocles’ over the Iranians - a clear hint of what will happen if they do not engage seriously and move to suspend their uranium enrichment program...If engagement does not work, then I’m prepared to mark up the bill in committee early this fall.” The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act currently has 274 sponsors. (*AIPAC Update 7/23/09*)

The *Jerusalem Post* reported on July 22, that Rafik Natsheh, a member of the Fatah Central Committee and chairman of the group’s disciplinary court, told *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* that “Fatah does not recognize Israel’s right to exist, nor have we ever asked others to do so.” Natsheh is the second veteran senior leader of Fatah that has made similar statements regarding Israel in recent months. Muhammad Dahlan said that Fatah had never recognized Israel’s right to exist even though it is the largest faction in the PLO, which signed the Oslo Accords with Israel. Fatah’s general assembly is slated to take place in Bethlehem on August 4, the first in two decades,

(*Israel, continued on page two*)

United States

CHOICE

The House of Representatives has approved a DC appropriations bill that will allow locally raised funds to pay for abortion services for low-income women. The bill was strongly supported by Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and was consistent with President Obama’s call for an end to the ban. Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America said, “We commend the House for passing a bill that reverses this 15 year-old anti-choice policy...Congress doesn’t tell any other state or local jurisdiction how to use its local revenue, so it’s past time to end this unfair and discriminatory policy...” The Senate Appropriations Committee has rejected an anti-choice amendment to reinsert the D.C. ban and will take up the bill in the near future.

A federal appeals court has upheld the constitutionality of an Illinois law that requires teenage girls to notify their parents before having abortions. The appeals court described the law as “a permissible attempt to help a young woman make an informed choice about whether to have an abortion.” It does not require the consent of parents but only that they be notified before the procedure. The law includes a judicial bypass, allowing teenagers to notify a judge instead. The original parental notification law was passed in 1984 and updated in 1995. In its ruling, the court dissolved an injunction barring application of the statute.

Research done at Planned Parenthood clinics across the country shows that approximately one-fourth of American women getting early abortions last year did so with drugs, rather than surgery. “This is the first really huge documentation of how safe and effective medical abortion is,” said Dr. Beverly Winikoff, a professor of family health and population at Columbia University. “The technology is very good and very well used in this country, and probably will be used more and more.” The results were reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on July 9.

JAC NEWSbreak, for JAC Leadership Circle, is a monthly publication of JACPAC.
Writer: Joy Malkus
President: Barbara Bluhm-Kaul
Executive Director: Marcia Balonick
Tel (847) 433-5999 Fax (847) 433-6194
Email jacpac123@aol.com
Web www.jacpac.org © JAC 2009

Research & Races

2010 RACES

Senate

Colorado - Democratic Senator Michael Bennet (appointed when Senator **Ken Salazar** became Secretary of the Interior) has no primary opponents as of this date. There are three declared Republican opponents: Ken Buck, Weld County District Attorney, Ryan Frazier, Aurora City Councilman, and Cleve Tidwell, businessman. Several other Republicans are looking at the race, including two former members of Congress.

Connecticut - Five term incumbent Democratic Senator **Chris Dodd** is considered vulnerable because of his position as chair of the Senate Banking Committee. Dodd could have primary opposition, but there will definitely be a hotly contested GOP primary. Former U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons and state Senator Sam Calafiuri have announced. Businessman and former Ambassador to Ireland Thomas Foley is likely to declare.

Illinois - Democratic incumbent Senator Roland Burris (appointed following President Obama's election) is not running. Democratic state Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias has declared; businessman Chris Kennedy (son of Robert Kennedy) and Chicago Urban League CEO Cheryle Jackson are both considering the race. On the GOP side, 10th district U.S. Rep. **Mark Kirk** has formally announced and several other Republicans have expressed interest. This is likely to be one of the most expensive and tight races of the cycle.

New Hampshire - GOP Senator Judd Gregg is retiring and Democratic U.S. Rep. **Paul Hodes** is running. Former Senator John Sununu has decided not to run. Attorney General Kelly Ayotte has declared while at least four other Republicans are considering the race, including former U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass.

Texas - GOP Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison has announced that she

will resign her seat some time in late 2009 or early 2010 to enter the Governor's race. Two Democrats have already declared: former Comptroller John Sharp and Houston Mayor Bill White. Several potential Republican candidates are waiting for Hutchison to step down, including Attorney General Gregg Abbott, Lt. Governor David Dewhurst, state Senator Florence Shapiro and Railroad Commissioner Elizabeth Ames Jones. Hutchison's retirement could offer the Democrats a pick-up opportunity.

House

California 32 - The newest member of the House of Representatives is Democrat Judy Chu, the first Chinese American woman elected to Congress. She won a special election to succeed **Hilda Solis**, now Secretary of Labor. Chu has a doctorate in psychology and taught at Los Angeles City College and East Los Angeles College. She was a member of the California Assembly from 2001 to 2006.

Right Wing Watch

The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* reported that Ralph Reed, head of the Christian Coalition from 1989 to 1997, is starting a new organization, the Faith and Freedom Coalition, with the goal of "rejuvenating Christian conservatives." Reed believes that conservative voters need a "Christian Coalition 2.0" that has to be "younger, hipper, less strident, more inclusive and it has to harness the 21st century that will enable us to win in the future." Reed says this is a grassroots coalition of "people of faith, small businessmen and women, and like-minded citizens dedicated to promoting sound public policy at every level of government... We are advocating time-honored val-

ues, protecting the dignity of life and marriage, reducing taxes, and insuring fiscal responsibility in Washington."

When Reed left the Christian Coalition in 1997, he went to work on George W. Bush's presidential campaign as chairman of the Georgia GOP. He was a political strategist for a while and then candidate for Lt. Governor in 2006. But during that campaign, his friend Jack Abramoff was convicted in a massive lobbying scandal and Reed was linked to a plot to defraud Indian tribes fighting over casino rights. He was never accused of wrongdoing but the fallout ended his campaign. Reed's critics, both on the left and the right,

say don't count him out...he might be able to deliver what the GOP needs.

Remember Judge Roy Moore? He was the Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court who was thwarted in his attempts to display the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. Now, he is seeking the Republican nomination for Governor of Alabama. Although this race is still sixteen months away, if Moore can win the GOP primary, his likely opponent will be Democratic Rep. **Artur Davis**, a four-term congressman from Birmingham and a Harvard Law school classmate of President Obama. We will keep you posted on this race.

Middle East, continued from page one

and is expected to bring some 1,500 delegates together. One of the topics on the conference's agenda is whether Fatah should formally abandon the armed struggle and recognize Israel's right to exist. In his interview with *Al-Quds*, Natshel stressed that neither Fatah nor the Palestinians "would ever relinquish the armed struggle against Israel no matter how long the occupation continues," and the upcoming conference "would reiterate its adherence to the option of pursuing

all forms of an armed struggle against Israel." (*Jerusalem Post* 7/22/09)

A new poll, carried out by the Maagar Mohot Survey Institute and made available to the *Jerusalem Post*, showed that "64% of Israeli Jews believe Israel would not be able to trust international pledges for its security in return for settlement withdrawals in the West Bank." The survey also found that "71% were adamant the government must insist that the Pales-

tinians freeze all West Bank construction if a similar freeze were forced on Israel." Particularly revealing were figures showing Israeli distrust of the Palestinian Authority leadership and Mahmoud Abbas, its president. Sixty-two percent said "the PA leaders want to establish a state instead of Israel, while only 27% said Palestinian leaders want the two nations to live side-by-side." (*Jerusalem Post online* 7/24/09)