

JAC NEWSbreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

August 27, 2012

On my mind this month...



Gail Yamner

The selection of Rep. Paul Ryan as the likely Republican nominee for vice president should sound alarm bells. Ryan is more than just a deficit

hawk. He is co-sponsor of some of the most anti-woman legislation. He has stood shoulder to shoulder with fellow Rep. Todd Akin when it comes to rape and deciding when it is legitimate and when it is not. This Romney-Ryan ticket has staked out a far right position that is wrong for the Jewish community and wrong for the country.

The US House and many state legislatures have passed a spate of laws restricting women's reproductive rights. These laws range from invasive, forced ultrasounds rules to laws about personhood, fetal pain, in vitro fertilization and contraception. When lawmakers go so far as to classify rapes as either "forcible" or "other," and when they allow hospitals to refuse abortion care to women whose lives depend on it, they are revealing their true agenda. Pro-life, indeed!

Voters who are likely to support pro-choice, pro-woman candidates (i.e., Democrats) have become the target of voter photo id laws and reduced voting days and hours – measures that disenfranchise minorities, elderly and students. When we tamper with voting and women's rights, we forsake basic principles of democracy and risk our standing as a great society.

JAC will be coordinating volunteer get-out-the-vote efforts in battleground states. Watch your email for more information. Please email jacpac123@aol.com if you have not been receiving email from JAC. You are missing out on timely updates.

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Israel

In efforts to tighten the sanctions on Iran, Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Sens. Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) have sent letters to the Administration urging the President to issue sanctions against the Pacific Island nation of Tuvalu and Tanzania. Both nations have been re-registering oil tankers owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company in an effort to dodge current sanctions. The sanctions that President Obama just signed into law target countries that aid and abet Iranian ships. Tougher sanctions are part of diplomatic efforts to persuade Iran to curb its nuclear program. Efforts by the United States and Israel to isolate Iran suffered a setback last week when the United Nations announced that the secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, would join officials from 120 countries in Tehran for a summit meeting that "Iran has trumpeted as a vindication of its defiance and enduring important in world affairs." The new president of Egypt, Mohamed Morsi, said he would also attend the meeting. Egypt has long been estranged from Iran. "The summit... is intended to showcase Iran's global role and offer concrete evidence that the U.S. policy of isolating Iran has failed," said Farideh Farhi, an Iranian scholar at the University of Hawaii. U.N. spokesman, Martin Nesirky, said "the secretary general is fully aware of the sensitivities of this visit." Mr. Ban expects to meet with senior Iranian leaders, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and hopes to have "meaningful and fruitful discussions... to boycott the invitation would be a missed opportunity." PM Netanyahu telephoned Mr. Ban on August 10 and told him that such a trip, even if well intentioned, would be a mistake. "Your visit will grant legitimacy to a regime that is the greatest threat to world peace and security." David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, said, "We are stunned that Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

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United States

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In an effort to explain his stance on abortion, Representative Todd Akin, the Republican Senate nominee from Missouri, provoked ire across the political spectrum by saying that in instances of what he called "legitimate rape," women's bodies somehow block an unwanted pregnancy. (NYT 8/19/12) The policy of forcing a rape victim to carry the fetus to term is part of the Republican platform and a provision in proposed Congressional legislation. Although Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan criticized Akin's statement and called for his ouster from the race, the issue is not so clear cut. Mitt Romney, in a move to appease the right wing of his party, chose a vice presidential candidate with a 100% anti-choice voting record. In 2011, the House passed the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, co-sponsored by Paul Ryan, Todd Akin and 186 others. The bill would have introduced the term "forcible rape" to the above mentioned legislation. (First Read 8/23/12) After a concerted effort from women's groups, that term was taken out of the already harsh bill.

Who is Paul Ryan and what are his views on abortion that could influence a Romney presidency? From an April 5, 2000, transcript of floor debate in the House, we learn what Rep. Ryan (R-WI) believes about whether abortions should be allowed in cases where the mother's health is in danger. He said, "the health exception is a loophole wide enough to drive a Mack truck through it." Recently in an interview with a local station, Ryan said about his abortion position, that "the method of conception" does not alter the "definition of life." (Politico 8/23/12) Ryan co-sponsored the Sanctity of Human Life Act, a bill defining fertilized eggs as human beings. This would criminalize some forms of birth control, in vitro fertilization and abortion. (Daily Beast 8/11/12. Ryan said in a 1999 interview with Life News, "I'm as pro-life as a person gets.")

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Research & Races

Arizona – GOP Sen. Jon Kyl is retiring. Former Surgeon General Richard Carmona (D) will likely face GOP Rep. Jeff Flake. Flake has a mixed record on Israel, is anti-choice and anti-separation. Carmona's compelling life story – born to immigrant parents, left school to join the army, returned to earn multiple degrees, became a trauma surgeon – makes him an excellent candidate against Flake.

Florida – Dem. Sen. Bill Nelson is running for his third term. He sits on the important Budget and Intelligence committees and has a perfect voting record on JAC's three issue. Nelson's challenger is GOP Rep. Connie Mack, whose famous last name gives him an advantage. He is not pro-choice or pro-separation of religion and state. Nelson leads by a small margin.

Massachusetts – Democrat Elizabeth Warren is challenging GOP Sen. Scott Brown who was elected in a special election, with small voter turnout and a lackluster Democratic candidate, to complete the term of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy. Warren's positions are excellent on JAC's issues. She is especially strong on reproductive rights and equal pay for equal work. Demographics favor Warren but Brown has cast himself as a moderate. Capturing this seat will not be easy.

Michigan – Dem. Sen. Debbie Sta-

benow is a longstanding JAC friend. She now chairs the Senate Agriculture committee. She will face former GOP Rep. Peter Hoekstra. Stabenow leads, but bad jobs numbers in recession-hit Michigan could change that lead.

Missouri - Dem. Sen. Claire McCaskill, running for her second term, has an outstanding record on JAC's issues. Her opponent made headlines this week when he said women who are raped cannot become pregnant. GOP Rep. Todd Akin's ignorant comments should help McCaskill, but he raised \$1,000,000 in the next 24 hours.

Montana – First-term Sen. Jon Tester is running against the GOP at-large Rep. Dennis Rehberg. Tester's votes on JAC's issues are perfect. Rehberg has an anti-choice, anti-separation record. He is closely tied to mining interests. This race is a pure toss-up.

Nevada – JAC member and long time friend Dem. Rep. Shelley Berkley is challenging appointed GOP Sen. Dean Heller in a race that goes back and forth in the polls. A top campaigner, Berkley has a second opponent: Nevada billionaire Sheldon Adelson, who has pledged to spend \$100 million to defeat Berkley and President Obama.

New Mexico – Dem. Rep. Martin Heinrich is running to keep this seat in the Democratic column. As a con-

gressman, his votes have consistently met JAC's criteria. He will face former GOP Rep. Heather Wilson, who often did not agree with JAC's position, especially on choice. Polls show Heinrich with a small lead.

North Dakota – Former N.D. Dem. Atty General Heidi Heitkamp will face GOP at-large Rep. Rick Berg. Five-term Dem. Sen. Kent Conrad is retiring. Republicans considered this an easy pick-up until Heitkamp entered the race. She shares JAC's values; Berg's votes are all negative.

Virginia – Two former Governors are dueling for this Open seat. Dem. Tim Kaine and Republican George Allen are neck and neck in the polls. Kaine's positions on JAC's issues are good; Allen's are not. Virginia is a swing state. Presidential voting could affect the Senate contest.

Wisconsin – Dem. Rep. Tammy Baldwin is running against former GOP Governor Tommy Thompson in a state, which has seen a battle between its GOP Governor and the unions during the past months. Voters are tired and results are likely to depend on who has the best grass roots "get out the vote" efforts. Baldwin's votes in the House have been good on JAC's issues. She would be the first openly gay Senator.

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Romney believes abortion should be legal in cases of rape or incest, or when the mother's life is in danger. Ryan has taken the position that all abortions, even in the case of rape and incest, should be outlawed, only extending exceptions to protecting the mother's life. Paul Ryan said he's comfortable with Mitt Romney's less-rigid stance on abortion now that

he shares the GOP presidential ticket because it's a "good step in the right direction." (*ABC News* 8/22/12)

The Republican Platform being introduced in Tampa at the Republican convention seems to mirror the Ryan approach. Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, the convention chairman, helped to draft a plat-

form that reaffirmed support for a constitutional amendment banning abortion. This amendment would allow no exceptions for terminating pregnancies. (*Bloomberg Businessweek* 8/22/12) He told reporters that the draft "reflects the views of the grass-roots leaders" of the party and "affirms our belief in traditional values."

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would honor a regime that consistently ignores both him and the world body he heads in ways that threaten regional and global security." (*NYTimes* 8/22)

Former Military Intelligence Chief Amos Yadlin told the Jerusalem Post (8/22) that "Egypt's tanks are in Sinai for fighting terrorism... what the Egyptians are doing in Sinai today is a more significant effort than in the past to deal with terrorism..." Armed Salafis

and jihadists have found refuge in the Bedouin villages in the El-Arish area. And, Sinai residents have smuggled Africans into Israel for money. As a result of the recent deployment of armored vehicles, the number of infiltrations into Israel has decreased as has terrorist activity along the border fence. Egypt's newly appointed Defense Minister, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, telephoned his Israeli counterpart, Ehud Barak, and stressed

Cairo's commitment to the 1979 peace treaty. Yet there is real concern among Israel's policy makers over what they see as Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi's efforts to downgrade the security-related cooperation between the two countries and chip away at the peace treaty which mandates that the Sinai Peninsula remain demilitarized and that any changes occurring in the field be coordinated and agreed upon by both sides." (*Israel Hayom* 8/22)