

# JAC NEWSbreak

VITAL NEWS & RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR JAC LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

September 24, 2012

## On my mind this month...



Gail Yamner

With a little over 40 days left until the 2012 election, most Americans are now tuning in to the campaigns. If you live in one of a dozen swing

states, you are praying for the political ads to stop. If you don't live in a swing state, robo calls and mailers are inundating your world. But tune in we must. It is incumbent on each of us to review the issues, the policies, and the path that each candidate and his party platform will take. Which campaign most closely aligns with your values?

The message from Governor Romney is that America is the land of opportunity. Just work hard, build a business and enjoy your comfortable life. This life will provide you with the funds to pay for health care and if you are under 55, you will receive a health care voucher for your later years. If you are lucky, your private Social Security account will have appreciated. If the market tanks, you didn't want to be dependent on government anyway. Right? In this land of opportunity, *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned by a Supreme Court with 3 to 4 Romney picks. Are these your values?

The message from President Obama is that America is a land of opportunities. If you need help with college loans, Pell grants are available. If you have a pre-existing condition, want preventive care or are over 65, Obamacare provides affordable health care. If you are concerned with a woman's right to make her own reproductive decisions and exercise her own health care options, *Roe v. Wade* and Obamacare are in place.

Vote your values. I am voting mine. I choose Obama.

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## Israel

Israel has been the only stable democracy in the Middle East since its birth 64 years ago. It lives in an unstable neighborhood of countries ruled by kings or dictators, disguised as "elected" presidents. There have been wars and periods of relative peace – relative because even those periods have been broken by terrorist attacks and rocket incursions. More recently, there has been a whole change in Middle East dynamics brought about by the Arab spring, which was supposed to have ushered in an era of greater democracy. In fact, the "Arab Spring" has brought new instability and conflict to the neighborhood. The peace process between Israel and the Palestinians is at a standstill. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas plans to go to the United Nations General Assembly again this fall to seek upgraded status, if not full membership, for a Palestinian state. The overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and the election of Mohammed Morsi, a leader in the Muslim Brotherhood, has put the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in jeopardy. The attempt to oust the Assad government in Syria, which has been met with brutal violence and mass murders by the regime, puts Israel's quiet northern border at risk. Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad continues to rant that Israel is a cancer in the Middle East and must be wiped off the map. Iran's nuclear program threatens Israel and the entire region, not to mention the world. The sanctions which have been enacted are causing disruption in the Iranian economy and are slowing down but not stopping uranium enrichment.

The nature of the bond between the US and Israel is like that of a close family, caring and supporting each other without fail but not always agreeing. For example, both countries agree that Iran must be stopped from building a nuclear weapon. But since Israel is a much closer and easier to reach target than the United States, there may be differ-

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## United States

### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

On September 5, the Subcommittee on Health of the House Energy and Commerce Committee released a report that made clear the anti-woman agenda of the Republican-controlled 112th Congress. Since the beginning of the 112th Congress in January 2011, the House has cast 55 votes for anti-women policies that determine women's health, roll back women's rights, and defund programs and institutions that provide support for women. The report was prepared by the Democratic staff of the Energy and Commerce Committee. The House passed an average of one anti-women vote every week, constituting almost 5% of the entire House legislative votes taken since January 2011. Reactions to the report came from the heads of organizations serving women and members of Congress. "Representative Waxman's report demonstrates just how out of touch House Republicans are with the needs of American families. Rather than passing legislation to create jobs or address the economic downturn, House Republicans have focused relentlessly on attacking women's access to healthcare," said Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Nancy Keenan, President NARAL Pro-Choice America, said "From the 'Let Women Die' bill to IRS rape audits to attempts to defund family planning programs, Americans have seen an unprecedented number of attacks on women's health in recent months. Rep. Waxman's report documents the lengths to which the Congress has gone in trying to dismantle reproductive freedom." Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) said, "This report highlights an unfortunate truth about this Congress – that instead of focusing on jobs and the economy, the Republican majority has re-opened the culture wars, with the safety and well-being of women bearing the brunt of this effort." Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) said, "In case anyone had any question, this report provides the detailed evidence – vote after vote after vote-

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## Research & Races

The 2012 election is November 6, less than two months away. Thirty-three Senate seats and 435 House seats will be decided on that day. Winners determine which party keeps or gains the majority and, therefore, controls the Congressional agenda. The President is likely to make at least one, and maybe up to three, Supreme Court nominations that must be confirmed by the Senate.

During the past week, GOP Congressional candidates have seen their numbers drop with the decline in Presidential candidate Mitt Romney's numbers. But six weeks is a long time and any "breaking news" can change those numbers. It is imperative that JAC candidates have the resources to get their message out and their voters mobilized. Please look carefully at the JAC highlighted Senate races in last month's and this month's Newsbreak – Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The following four high profile House races could result in a win for pro-

Choice and pro-Separation votes:

**CA-07** Physician and 2010 candidate **Ami Bera** is challenging GOP Rep. Dan Lungren, who has been an anti-choice vote for 18 years. Lungren barely won in '10 with 50.1%. **FL-18** **Patrick Murphy** is running against GOP Rep. Allen West. In 2011, West called Obama a "low-level socialist agitator" well versed in "Marxist" rhetoric. Earlier this year, West charged that 81 of his Democratic colleagues were actually communists. **IL-08** **Tammy Duckworth** hopes to unseat GOP Rep. Joe Walsh, who says that Duckworth is not a "hero" because she talks about her service in Iraq where she lost both her legs. When first elected in 2010, Walsh told a Chicago Jewish Federation meeting that he was elected to promote the GOP agenda and would never work across the aisle. **IA-04** Former Iowa first lady **Christie Vilsack** is challenging GOP Rep. Steve King, whose xenophobic obsession is immigration. King has been a negative vote on JAC's domestic issues for 10 years.

The following JAC-supported House

incumbents are having difficult races:

**CA-24** Dem. Rep. **Lois Capps** has been a strong voice for choice for 16 years. She is facing former California Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado in a swing district covering the central coast. **NY-17** Dem. Rep. **Nita Lowey** has been a JAC friend for 24 years. This district still favors the Democrat, but Lowey has a large number of new constituents. **NY-25** Dem. Rep. **Louise Slaughter** has been fighting for women for 30 years. She is being challenged by county executive Maggie Brooks. This new district for Slaughter is more conservative than her old one.

The following races are Open seats – new districts or districts where the incumbent is not seeking re-election:

**NM-01** **Michelle Lujan Grisham** is ahead in the polls for the seat currently held by Senate candidate **Martin Heinrich**. She is pro-Israel and pro-choice with an extensive background in healthcare. **NV-01** Former Dem. Rep. **Dina Titus** will likely return to the House in the seat now held by Senate candidate **Shelley Berkley**. Titus' record on JAC's issues was perfect.

## Separation of Religion & State

The Rev. John A. Farren of the Church of St. Catherine of Siena on the Upper East Side of Manhattan told his congregation, "I am aware that I and no church authority may endorse candidates for political office." Then, Father Farren referred to a letter in the bulletin written by six former ambassadors to the Vatican who said they were supporting Mitt Romney for President because of his opposi-

tion to abortion, to marriage rights for same-sex couples and to aspects of the national health care law that require coverage of contraceptives. "We urge our fellow Catholics, and indeed all people of good will, to join with us in this full-hearted effort to elect Gov. Mitt Romney as the next President of the United States." Father Farren was filling in for the parish's pastor, who was taking a break on Labor

Day weekend. A parishioner attending Mass sent the bulletin to Americans United for Separation of Church and State, which filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service. On Tuesday morning when the church pastor, Rev. Jordan Kelly, returned to celebrate Mass, there was a new stack of bulletins with a note, "The reprinting of this letter was an unfortunate error in judgment... I regret the confusion."

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of the House Republican majority's repeated attacks on women's health and economic wellbeing.... Women deserve a Congress that responds to their needs – not wages war against them."

Twenty women's health centers in Virginia could be forced to close down if the new regulations passed by the Virginia Board of Health are allowed to go into effect. The Board had made an earlier decision to grandfather in existing clinics, but after months of

pressure from Attorney General Cuccinelli, the Board reversed its decision and ignored the advice of legal and medical experts. The new regulations would force existing clinics to comply with building regulations required for new construction.

### *Israel, continued from page one*

ences in tactics on how to achieve that goal. The American political system features protracted presidential election campaigns that are hard for Israelis to fathom and Israel has a multi-party parliamentary system that is equally baffling to us. The political

winds shift in both countries and not always in predictable ways. By all the measures that count – financial aid, security cooperation, joint economic ventures, military exercises, cooperative scientific and biomedical research, shared values, ongoing and regular

personal communications from the President on down – the United States and Israel are the closest of allies and the warmest of friends. Considering the upheaval in the region, this relationship is more important than ever.