

## U.S.-Israel Relationship

This fall saw the fifth election in nearly four years in Israel. Lawmakers have been unable to form a stable coalition to govern since 2019.

This election brings back former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In order to secure the needed seats to form a coalition government, he has included extreme far-right wing lawmakers in his camp. This has caused concern among many regarding the potential impact and future of the U.S.-Israel relationship and the peace process.

However, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security remains 'ironclad' and that America respects the 'democratic choice of the Israeli people.'



JAC leadership with President Biden in October

Israel continued to deepen its ties to Arab states. It signed an historic agreement with Egypt and the European Union to export its natural gas allowing them to be less reliant on Russian oil.

The U.S. and Israeli air forces conducted one of the largest joint drills simulating offensive strikes against Iran's nuclear program to deter the continued threat from Iran.

During his 10th visit to Israel, President Biden was presented with the country's Presidential Medal of Honor, the highest civilian honor, by Israeli President Isaac Herzog. Biden was recognized for his 50 years of support for Israel.

## Antisemitism & BDS

There has been a 34 percent rise in antisemitism since last year, averaging out to more than seven antisemitic incidents per day in the U.S. Overall hate crimes have surged to levels not seen for almost two decades. Experts say this number may be higher because thousands of police departments failed to report their data.

The BDS movement, which is blatantly antisemitic, has grown on college campuses across the country - but adults seem to be unaware of the problem. A Pew Research Center survey found that nearly 85 percent of adults surveyed have heard 'not much' or 'nothing at all' about the movement.

Social media continues to be a breeding ground for antisemitism. There is a greater concern now that Elon Musk has taken over Twitter. Since his takeover, tweets with the most engagement were overtly antisemitic.

A California District Attorney deactivated his office's official Twitter account because of an 'explosion of hate speech.' He is asking all elected District Attorneys through the U.S. to do the same.

The White House has made combating antisemitism a top priority. Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff convened a round table discussion on the problem, while Biden has formed an inter-agency task force to develop a national strategy to combat antisemitism.

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## Reproductive Rights

This year will be remembered as a dark moment for women in the United States. Almost 50 years since the Supreme Court determined women had the right to make their own health care decisions and that abortion was legal, we lost that right to a new extremist Court. The 2022 SCOTUS ruling to overturn Roe v. Wade struck at the heart of our liberties and freedom — not just for women, but for everyone in this country.



Abortion rights advocate Cecile Richards headlined the 2022 JAC Power of Women Luncheon

Until Congress can codify Roe, states now have the authority to enact their own restrictive and punitive laws. Thirteen states immediately made abortion illegal as soon as the SCOTUS hearing was handed down. Other states have made accessing care nearly impossible.

In Oklahoma, abortion became a felony subject to up to 10 years in prison. Texas, which has been leading the country in extreme laws, enacted a whistleblower-type law where an individual can sue anyone who "aids or abets" an abortion and receive a \$10,000 reward. This can even be a taxi driver who transports a woman to the clinic for an abortion.

With Roe overturned, we will see fewer doctors trained to perform abortions and related procedures. According to medical experts, this will affect other forms of medical training including miscarriage management, sexual and domestic assault treatment, counseling patients, and emergency care.



JAC members protesting the SCOTUS decision overturning Roe v Wade.



2022 Power of Women Luncheon

Biden signed two executive orders to help women access reproductive health care in light of the SCOTUS ruling. He directed HHS to "take action" to protect access to medication for abortion and update guidance to ensure that emergency care is not affected by abortion restrictions. His other order directs HHS to find ways to expand coverage for patients traveling out of state for reproductive healthcare.

The antichoice movement now wants to go after medication abortions, which account for more than half of all abortions. Nearly five million people nationwide have used mifepristone in the last 20 years.

A group of Senators wrote a letter to the FDA Commissioner encouraging the agency to defend Americans' reproductive rights, and to consider steps to protect and expand access to medication abortion.

There was some good news. Kansas, Kentucky, and Montana voters defeated anti-choice ballot initiatives in November.

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