

# Joint Action Update

May 2010

## When Right is Wrong

### Guns, God and Government



*Gail Yamner took the podium in Washington, DC, upon election as President of JAC*

As the Tea Partiers criss-cross the country claiming they want their country back and demanding freedoms they say have been denied, we have been trying to determine exactly what they want. As far as we can tell, they want their country back from the Democrats; they want the freedom to impose Christianity, to bring their guns

wherever they go; they want to be relieved of the requirement to pay taxes and they want to reverse the results of the 2008 election.

Although President Obama won with a clear majority there are those who question his legitimacy as President. They question his birth even though his birth certificate has been verified countless times and his mother put a birth announcement in the Hawaiian newspaper. Do they imagine a woman from Kansas set up a fictitious baby announcement in order to get her foreign-born son elected President some forty years later? That is a conspiracy worthy of the Manchurian Candidate.

The Tea Partiers seem to be upset that a Democrat is in the White House after eight years of GOP occupancy. Some observers suspect race is a factor in attitudes toward this particular President.

Many states around the country are passing laws to impose Christianity in school classrooms, courthouses, and drugstores. Textbooks are being changed to recast the intent and the accomplish-

ments of the founding fathers, crosses are being erected on public lands, national prayer days are being argued in the courts, and pharmacists and hospital workers are refusing to provide patient care because of "religious" objections.

Guns are a hot topic. Many groups around the country are demanding their so-called second amendment rights and to them this means guns on demand. A grass-roots effort among some gun rights advocates is shifting attention to a different goal: the right to carry unconcealed weapons in public view with little or no restrictions. Thirty-eight states already have such laws. In the last year guns have come into schools, state parks, rallies and Starbucks. Washington, DC lost the right to have safe gun restrictions and right now Chicago has a case before the Supreme Court so that the city can continue to regulate guns and where and when they may be carried. The Colorado Court of Appeals has ruled in favor of a group seeking to allow students with concealed-carry permits to carry their weapons on campus. However, most mayors and police officers know that gun violence will increase if guns are allowed on college campuses, in crowded rallies, bars, and restaurants. New York Mayor Bloomberg said recently, "Enough is enough. We need Congress to finally do the right thing and take action on S.843/H.R.2324, the bill to close the Gun Show Loophole." The gun debate is growing louder across the country as guns are coming out of the closet and into society and reasonable restrictions are being overturned by the courts and state legislatures.

*continued on page 7*



Joint Action Committee  
for Political Affairs  
P.O. Box 105  
Highland Park, IL 60035  
Tel 847. 433. 5999  
Fax 847. 433. 6194  
Email [jacpac123@aol.com](mailto:jacpac123@aol.com)  
Web [www.jacpac.org](http://www.jacpac.org)

# Issue Update: Israel

## Worldwide Campaign Aimed at Israel's Right to Exist

Delegitimization, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary, means to diminish or destroy the legitimacy, prestige, or authority of <delegitimize a government>. Michael Oren, Israeli ambassador to the United States, says that delegitimization is the most recent manifestation of threats to the existence of Israel.

At the JAC Annual Meeting, Oren, a historian, said the first wave of threats was war, the second terrorism, and now the third is delegitimization. A global effort that began in 2001 at the U.N. conference on racism in Durban, South Africa, the goal is to paint Israel as a pariah/apartheid state that has committed war crimes and deserves political and economic isolation.

The principal weapons used are the boycott of Israeli products, people and events, divestment from Israeli companies and boycotting foreign companies doing business with Israel. This includes boycotts of Israeli artists, athletes and authors as well as foreign artists going to Israel to entertain. Many Israeli experts say these tactics, known as BDS (for boycott/divestment/sanctions), are a new form of global anti-Semitism.

The Goldstone Report of the UN Human Rights Council, the boycott votes at universities, arrest warrants for Israeli leaders and the shouting down of Israeli speakers, including Oren, are all evidence of the campaign to do more than just disparage

Israel. What is the danger? What is the goal? The danger and goal of this program combine to deny Israel's right to exist as a Jewish nation. One tactic is repudiation of the 2-state solution in favor of one state that would soon have an Arab majority. In that case Israel would either cease to be a democracy or cease to be Jewish. Another is the right of return that would have the same effect. The Reut Institute, a non-partisan Tel-Aviv-based think tank, urges those in power to treat this issue with the same seriousness as military threats. They say the "hubs" of the campaign are in places like Madrid, London and the Californian bay area. NGOs like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International add fuel to the delegitimizers' fire with their harsh and disproportionately critical findings on Israel.

What is happening now in the United States is a growing willingness on college campuses to participate in this battle. Our colleges and universities educate our country's future leaders, both Jewish and non Jewish, and they are being specifically targeted. People prey on those who lack basic knowledge about the complex nature of Middle East politics – people who can easily fall victim to simplistic and often inaccurate narratives. In recent years Israel Apartheid Week has been observed on college campuses. The organizers, through lectures and rallies that promote Israel as an apartheid system, push for BDS, including boycotts of Israeli academics and collaboration with their universities. As the condemnation of Israel as a Jewish homeland reaches thousands of students, many universities are beginning to fight back through their Hillels or other Jewish organizations. Recently the UC Berkeley Student Senate failed to pass an Israeli divestment bill despite intense lobbying from the global BDS network. Universities such as Northwestern, Illinois, Boston U., Brandeis, Cal State, Oklahoma, McGill, and Penn State have all had programs, speakers and events to teach Jewish and non Jewish students the facts about Israel. ■

*(l. to r.) Amy Jenkins, Gail Yammer, Ambassador Michael Oren, Morris Yammer, and Lisa Green*



# Issue Update: Reproductive Choice

## Women Losing Ground, Face New Restrictions



The new tactic in the anti-choice movement is to erect legislative barriers to obtaining an abortion. Its leaders no longer talk about reversing *Roe v. Wade*; they are working to make it obsolete. In state after state statutes are being enacted that require parental permission, waiting times, invasive vaginal ultrasounds, counseling, video watching and limiting the time period during which abortion is legal. Funding restrictions that go beyond the Hyde amendment have been codified in the new health care reform law

In Nebraska, the Republican Governor signed into law a bill that takes aim at abortion rights from a new perspective. It bans abortions after 20 weeks, on the premise that a fetus feels pain after that time period. The state also passed a law requiring women to undergo pre-abortion screenings for mental and physical problems. Critics say that there is no scientific evidence of fetal pain. Previously the standard for cut-off times was the viability of the fetus, which is weeks beyond the 20-week limit. Excluded was an exemption based on the mental health of the woman.

In Oklahoma, before getting an abortion a woman would be required to undergo an invasive vaginal ultrasound. This would even apply to a child who had been raped or a woman with a life-threatening illness. Women and their doctors would also be compelled to complete questionnaires that would



go to the state with information such as the race, age, education, and reason for the abortion.

In Illinois, a girl 17 or younger must have parental notification for an abortion. Last fall the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois filed a lawsuit against the state and challenged the parental consent law which says doctors must notify the parents or guardians of a girl 17 years old or younger 48 hours before she gets an abortion. Edwin Yohnka, Director of Communications and Public Policy for the ACLU, says the law poses a threat to young women who may have abuse issues that prevent them from consulting parents.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, 18 states enacted 34 laws related to abortion in 2009.

These states are posing significant access barriers for women seeking services. ■



*photo near left:  
(l. to r.) Gail Yamner,  
Nanci Rands, Rep.  
Howard Berman (D-  
CA), Sharon Wilkes  
Kinberg*

*photo far left:  
Senator Michael Ben-  
net (D-CO) and Betsy  
Sheerr*

*(l. to r.) Gail Yamner,  
Senator Kent Conrad  
(D-ND), shown hold-  
ing Dakota, Barbara  
Copeland, LaRue  
Porter, and Dana  
Gordon*

# Annual Meeting

## Israel, Iran and health care dominate discussions

*(clockwise from bottom left) Barbara Eber-Schmid, Julie Echt, Legislative Director Charles Dujon, Morris Yamner, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), and Anne Oppenheimer discuss JAC's issues during Annual Meeting visit*

Whether you're a political neophyte or a seasoned political junkie, going to the nation's capital with JAC is an experience not to be missed. On March 3rd, forty JAC members descended on Capitol Hill, after preparatory briefings, to meet with Congressional leaders principally to discuss Israel and the peace process, Iran and the nuclear threat. The keynote speaker was Israel's ambassador to the US, Michael Oren. A military hero, historian and diplomat, as well as a riveting speaker, Ambassador Oren discussed the "delegitimization" campaigns that are the latest wave of worldwide anti-Israel activity. As he strode into the hotel banquet room, Blackberry in hand, he read a message concerning UN censure of Israel. It was a timely reminder of the relentless assault on Israel's legitimacy. On a more upbeat note, he spoke about the enduring strength of the US-Israel relationship and the many cooperative ventures in intelligence, science and medicine.

Appointments on the Hill subsequently took many of the participants to the historic Rayburn room right outside the House chamber, where members of Congress greet visitors. One group met with Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). He talked about Iran sanctions and health care. The group then brought him up to date on IVAWA (International Violence Against Women Act) which had been discussed in detail during the briefings earlier in the day. He thanked JAC for



the update and said he would consider co-sponsorship.

The group convened for lunch in the historic Dirksen Senate building. The speakers, Senators Russ Feingold (D-WI), Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Patty Murray (D-WA), discussed health care reform, campaign finance and the inner workings of the Senate.

Face time with our elected leaders is crucial. Conversations and relationships work best to get our issues addressed and our point of view understood. This is pure democracy at work. Please join us for our next fly-in, scheduled for Wednesday June 23rd, and help strengthen the US-Israel relationship, keep abortion safe and legal and maintain the separation of religion and state. ■

*photo near right: (l. to r.) Lisa Green, Amy Jenkins, Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Gail Yamner, Roz Blanck confer in the Rayburn Room in the Capitol*



*photo far right: Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) in discussion with Joan Ramer, Dana Gordon, and Sharon Wilkes Kinberg*



# Supreme Court

## Why it matters

On May 10th, President Obama nominated Solicitor General Elena Kagan to succeed Justice John Paul Stevens on the Supreme Court. At 50, Kagan would be the Court's youngest member. If confirmed by the Senate, she would become only the fourth female justice in history and would give the Court its first three-woman presence. Known as sharp and politically savvy, Kagan was the first female dean of Harvard Law School and the first woman to serve as the top Supreme Court lawyer for any administration. She enjoys a reputation for bringing together people of competing views and earning their respect.

A Supreme Court justice, given a life tenure, outlasts any president who makes the appointment and has the potential to make a longterm impact on the important issues of the day. To see why this is so, we need only look to the text of the Constitution. It defines our most fundamental rights and protections in open-ended terms: "freedom of speech," for example, and "equal protection of the laws," "due process of law," "unreasonable searches and seizures," "free exercise" of religion and "cruel and unusual punishment." These terms are not self-defining; they did not have clear meanings even to the people who drafted them. The framers fully understood that they were leaving it to future generations to use their intelligence, judgment and experience to give concrete meaning to their expressed aspirations.

In considering a nominee to the Supreme Court, President Obama was committed to naming someone with a liberal point of view who would bring intellectual heft to the Court and powers of persuasion to win the swing vote of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy. The urgency became greater since the Citizens United decision in January, in which the Roberts court threw out precedent to rule that corporations, like individuals, have First Amendment rights to spend money in election campaigns.

Current matters under consideration include whether groups on college campuses can discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, new restrictive state abortion laws, and whether or not the city of Chicago can put limits on guns within city limits. The recently passed health care reform legislation is likely to be an issue before the courts in the next three to four years.

Immigration could make the docket following passage in Arizona of a sweeping and controversial law authorizing police officers to stop suspected illegal immigrants and demand proof of citizenship. Federal pre-emption would appear to be the most promising route for attacking the Arizona law. Supreme Court precedents have made it clear that immigration is a federal matter and that the Constitution does not authorize the states to conduct their own foreign policies. ■



*photo near left:  
(l. to r.) Linda Rae Sher, Dana Gordon, Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Joy Malkus, Marcia Balonick*

*photo far left:  
(l. to r.) Barbara Copeland, LaRue Porter, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), Dana Gordon, Marcia Balonick*

# Political Update

## High Profile Senate races



(l. to r.) former Congressman Herb Klein, Anita Wellen, Jacqueline Klein, Jimmy Greenbaum, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Harriet Joseph, Deborah Gitchell

**Nevada** -- Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is in the race for his political life. Seeking his 5th term, his poll numbers are down, his war chest is up (9 million dollars) and he is the top target of the GOP. Reid worked furiously to get the health care bill passed. He is a strong supporter of Israel as well as a leader on the Iran Sanctions

legislation. The Republicans are placing their bets on former state party chair, Sue Lowden, who hit the national air waves recently claiming that a “chickens for checkups” barter system would be an effective alternative to the recently passed health care reform bill. It is hoped that Reid can get the voters to recognize the power he wields for Nevada and his sensible approach to issues.

**Arizona** -- Senator John McCain faces a primary challenge from former congressman and radio talk show host, J.D. Hayworth. As McCain’s poll numbers drop against the self described Tea Party candidate, McCain moves further to the right. McCain has always been anti-choice and not progressive on church-state issues, but he was a sponsor of legislation to close gun show loopholes, and sponsored campaign finance reform. Now he supports the Arizona immigration law that allows police to stop people they “reasonably suspect” of being illegal, and he co-sponsored a bill to undo DC’s gun restrictions. Hayworth claims to be the “consistent conservative.” He questions Obama’s birth, favors torture and opposes stem cell research and choice. In an ever tightening race, Rodney Glassman is the sole Democrat. A self-described “nice Jewish boy” who wants to “give back,” he was the vice mayor of Tucson and

aide to Rep. Raul Grijalva. Glassman is pro-Israel, pro choice, pro-separation of religion and state -- and an extreme long shot.

**California** -- Senator Barbara Boxer (D) is running for her 4th term in what could be the toughest, most expensive race of her career. Chair of both the Environment and Public Works and the Select Ethics committees, Boxer has also been outspoken on issues concerning women. JAC has been working with her office to secure US ratification of the CEDAW treaty to stop discrimination against women, nationally and internationally. A champion on all of JAC’s issues, she has received JAC support over a 28-year Congressional career. She will face the winner of a crowded June 8th Republican primary featuring frontrunner former Hewlett Packard CEO/McCain 2008 campaign advisor Carly Fiorina and two other candidates. Fiorina has a bottomless campaign chest made possible by her large personal fortune. Boxer must overcome the dual challenges of the anti-incumbent national mood and the California economy.

**Florida** -- GOP Governor Charlie Crist will run in November as an Independent. Crist, who had been the leader in the race for the nomination to fill this open Senate seat, was overtaken from the right by former Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio. Rubio secured the endorsement of the Club for Growth and the national Conservative Political Action Committee. The presumptive Democratic nominee is JAC-supported US Rep. Kendrick Meek. Meek faces three opponents in the August 24 primary but is expected to win easily. Meek trails Rubio in the polls, but he has lots of room to grow and a three-way race should help him. Democrats have a 750,000 voter registration advantage. Meek has to fire up the Democratic base, especially African-Americans and Hispanics. If he can do that, he might become Florida’s first African-American US senator. ■

# JAC Around the Country

JAC members around the country have been very busy hosting meetings that have raised awareness and money. JAC has always reached out to different communities in order to educate and inspire on the important issues of the day. **New York** had two events, one featuring Rep. **Shelley Berkley** (D-NV) and the second with Aaron Etra, of Bnai Brith International, who spoke on the UN and the Goldstone Report. These events, organized by chapter chair **Janet Davis**, were attended by more than 40 women each and brought in new JAC members.

**Detroit** always has a great turnout for its annual event where interest in current events is strong. This year was no exception, thanks to **Lisa Lis** who spearheaded the meeting at **Florine Mark's** home. Seventy women turned out to hear Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ).



The day after passage of the health care bill, forty women came to **Boca Raton** to hear Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) at a meeting organized by **Rani Garfinkle and Gail Yamner**. Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL) spoke by teleconference.

**Chicago** started a new current events discussion series called Talking Points that has attracted new members. Talking Points speakers included political consultant **Amy Zisook**, Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Bill Foster (D-IL), journalist Andy Shaw, Congressional candidate Dan Seals (D-IL) and Chair of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Alan Solow. Talking Points hosts were: **Dana Gordon, Lila Ray Goldsmith, Susan Berk and Jodie Berkman**. Chicago Tribune Washington Bureau Chief Lynn Sweet was the headliner at an event hosted by **Linda Rae Sher**.



*photo near left:  
(l. to r. Rani Garfinkle  
and Rep. Loretta Sanchez  
(D-CA)*

*photo far left:  
(l. to r. Bill Brandt,  
Wendy Abrams, Rep.  
Bill Foster (D-IL),  
Deena Pascal and  
Nancy Rotering*

---

## *Right is Wrong, continued from page one*

Taxes are also a contentious issue. Tea partiers complain about paying taxes, as part of their general hostility to the federal government. However, as we saw in Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee, when natural disasters occur, people turn to the federal government for aid which is provided by tax dollars. Tax money is used for national de-

fense, public safety, hospitals, highways, infrastructure, food safety, drug efficacy -- and keeping the institutions of government running.

As arguments are getting more partisan and the center is harder to find, JAC will continue to provide information to sort out fact from fiction. ■

# JAC CONTRIBUTION FORM

JAC Update May 2010

Mail or fax this form with payment to: JAC, PO Box 105, Highland Park, IL 60035 Fax 847 433-6194

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I will \_\_\_join JAC/ \_\_\_renew my membership in JAC's Leadership Circle  
\_\_\_\$5000 \_\_\_\$2500 \_\_\_\$1000 \_\_\_\$500 \_\_\_\$250

I will make an additional donation to JAC to be allocated to candidates.

\_\_\_\$150 basic member

Check (payable to JAC)     Visa     Mastercard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp date \_\_\_\_\_

*Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation and employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. According to law, JAC cannot accept corporate contributions. Membership, gifts, or other payments to JAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.*



*Ambassador Michael Oren with (l. to r.) Samantha, Josh and Tina Wolf*

Joint Action Committee  
for Political Affairs  
P.O. Box 105  
Highland Park, IL 60035

