

### Presidential Outlook



Janna Berk

It is hard to believe it is election season, once again. Every day another candidate enters the Presidential race. Senators are deciding if they will run for another term.

Races are heating up as many elections will have primaries, with candidate on the same side of the aisle running against each other.

At JAC, we know that elections matter. The 2014 losses to many JAC-supported candidates meant that the House and the Senate became more anti-choice. Senators that we relied on for votes on women's reproductive rights, the environment, and gun violence prevention were voted out of office. Some of our most pro-Israel advocates are no longer in the House. Many people didn't vote because they were sick of elections, overwhelmed by ads, disappointed in the government and other reasons. But we must care. We must stay engaged. We must vote.

This election will be vital for our issues. The next President will have at least one Supreme Court pick. The Supreme Court decides issues about Israel, *Roe v Wade*, immigration, marriage equality, guns.... The Senate has become anti-choice and we see dangerous bills brought up on a regular basis. The House has a majority who denies climate change.

JAC will continue to send out action alerts, EZ Reads and NewsBreaks. We will put important articles on our Facebook page for you to read and share. We will have many opportunities for members to meet candidates and ask questions about the issues you care about. JAC is also offering outreach programs in different cities around the country. If you are interested in hosting a meeting, let us know. Stay involved. Let us know how we can help you get involved. We can win many of the 2016 races – but we must be advocates for our issues, and believe that our votes and voices make a difference. ❁

**ELECTIONS MATTER**

### ✧ Israel & the Middle East

Samantha Power, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, successfully appealed to UN Secretary Ban Ki-Moon to remove Israel from a UN draft of countries and terrorist groups accused of violating children's rights in the midst of a conflict. Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked the U.S. for blocking a UN decision to require an international conference aimed at making the Middle East a nuclear weapons-free zone by 2016, which would have put pressure on Israel to disclose details about its nuclear weapons capability. (*Foreign Policy* 6/1/2015) The U.S. continues to stand up against the frequent and unfair United Nations attacks against Israel.

To celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month, President Obama gave a powerful speech at a Washington, D.C. synagogue. His remarks centered on the U.S.-Israel

*ISRAEL continued on page 2*

### ♀ Reproductive Rights

According to a new Gallup poll, for the first time in nearly 10 years, more U.S. adults describe themselves as pro-choice than pro-life. The poll states 50% of those questioned support abortion rights. (*The Hill* 6/4/2015) Yet Congress and legislatures across the country are hard at work passing onerous and dangerous abortion restrictions. The Guttmacher Institute recently released startling data from the previous 10 years noting: 22 states have restricted access to abortion and 30 states have imposed waiting periods. The number of state legislatures and governors who support abortion rights has declined in 22 states and overall support for reproductive freedom in state houses remains dismal. The Institute for Women's Policy Research ranked each state on its support for women's rights: they gave 33 states Cs, Ds, or Fs.

Over 300 proposals to restrict and deny women's access to abortion services were

*REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS continued on page 3*

### ⚖ Separation of Religion & State

The current Supreme Court session brought a ruling regarding religious freedom in the workplace. In *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v Abercrombie & Fitch, Inc.*, the Court ruled that a person's religious beliefs, practices and observances, know or otherwise, "may not be a motivating factor" when deciding whether or not to hire. The case stemmed from a woman who wore a headscarf to her interview at Abercrombie & Fitch. She was not hired because the headscarf would conflict with the "Look Policy" of the company. The Religious Action Center released a statement commending the decision: "As Jews, we have historically known the insidious nature of religious discrimination – including workplace discrimination.... The Supreme Court demonstrated that no one should face discrimination because of their faith." (*Religious Action Center* 6/1/2015) As the Presidential election season heats up, climate science and evolution are coming

*SEPARATION continued on page 2*

### ⌘ Beyond the Core

Gun violence costs our society \$229 billion yearly, including \$8.6 billion in direct spending from emergency and other medical expenses, court and prison costs. (*Mother Jones* 4/15/15) Despite this societal impact, legislatures across the country are actively trying to weaken existing gun laws and increase the proliferation of firearms in our communities. Florida and Texas State legislatures have recently passed bills allowing firearms to be openly carried at all public universities. Their governors have promised to sign the bills into law, meaning eight states will allow guns on campuses compared to 19 states that ban them. (*NYT* 06/10/15) More guns

*BEYOND THE CORE continued on page 4*

**Go to [www.JACPAC.org](http://www.JACPAC.org) for more information on JAC's issues.**

### ISRAEL continued

relationship, peace with the Palestinians, the parallel between Jews and Blacks, anti-semitism, and the upcoming Iran deal. One of the few Presidents to speak at a synagogue while in office, he said, "...[T]hose shared values compel us to reaffirm that our enduring friendship with the people of Israel and our unbreakable bonds with the state of Israel, that friendship cannot be broken. I am committed to Israel's security." (*Times of Israel 6/22/2015*) On Iran, he stated, "Iran must not, under any circumstances, be allowed to get a nuclear weapon. I'm interested in a deal that blocks every single one of Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon, every single path." He also expressed deep concern about the disturbing rise of anti-semitism, calling it a threat to broader human values. Obama has said that anti-Israel sentiment is anti-semitism. Recently, Pope Francis concurred, saying, "[A]nyone who does not recognize the Jewish people and the State of Israel and their right to exist is guilty of anti-semitism." (*Times of Israel 6/22/2015*)

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-- Pope Francis**

Although people fret about the relationship between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu, the U.S.-Israel relationship continues to be strong and far-reaching. The Administration approved the sale of \$1.8 billion in advanced munition sales to Israel, including precision guidance devices and bunker busting bombs. (*JTA 5/21/2015*) The sale also included 3,000 Hellfire missiles, 250 medium-range missiles and 4,200 glide bombs. In a statement the State Department said, "The U.S. is committed to the security of Israel, and it is vital to U.S. national interests to assist Israel to develop and maintain a strong and ready self defense capability." (*Times of Israel 5/20/2015*) Congress also passed a resolution authored by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) condemning rising anti-semitism in Europe. The resolution calls on European governments to stand against anti-semitism and work to end it. The bill passed the Senate unanimously. (*Algemeiner 6/5/2015*) Additionally, Rep. Peter Roskam (IL-16), Rep. Juan Vargas (CA-15), **Sen. Ben Cardin** (D-MD), and Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) have co-authored legislation that would discourage European countries from participating in boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

In June, General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, went to Israel to assure Israeli officials that the U.S. would further strengthen Israel's arsenal of arms, warplanes and cyber technology in order to maintain Israel's qualitative edge over their enemies. He noted the joint strike fighters, the F-35 airplane, which is one of the world's most expensive weapons projects will be offered only to Israel and not to any Arab allies of the United States. The Pentagon has promised to continue to work with Israel to expand its military. (*New York Times 6/10/2015*)

The Supreme Court, by a 6-3 majority, struck down a Congressional law that would allow American citizens born in Jerusalem to designate Israel as their country of birth on their U.S. passports. Many Jewish groups were dismayed with this ruling defending the Administration's exclusive power to grant formal recognition of a foreign sovereign. (*Algemeiner 6/8/2015*) The decision is consistent with 60 years of U.S. policy, across all Administrations, regarding sovereignty of Jerusalem, leaving it to final negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. (*CNN 6/8/2015*)

The BDS movement picked up speed this past spring at campuses across America. In response, universities, Jewish groups, Congress, and state legislatures, including Illinois and North Carolina, are formulating plans and laws to stand up to efforts to boycott and isolate Israel. JAC will continue to keep you updated on these efforts. Students on college campuses must be educated and aware of the issues to effectively advocate for Israel while feeling safe and comfortable while away at school.

### SEPARATION continued

into the national debate. A recent study found only 43% of Republicans believe in evolution, while climate change is roundly denied as an issue by the right wing. Candidates Ben Carson, Sen. Rand Paul, Sen. Ted Cruz, former Sen. Rick Santorum, and Gov. Scot Walker have all cited God as their reason for denying evolution and climate change. If they do accept global warming is occurring, they deny human activity has an impact. (*Huffington Post 5/5/2015*) Recently Pope Francis joined the conversation when he stated that humans need to be stewards of the earth. Pope Francis is a certified chemical technician and worked as a chemist before taking his vows. When the Pope addresses a joint session of Congress later this year, he may challenge the right wing to accept the reality of climate change and support measures that would protect the environment. Many scientists say the Pope may be the key player on the acceptance of climate change. (*USA Today 6/15/2015*)

Various groups around the country are using Religious Freedom Laws to fight back against religion. RFRA (Religious Freedom Restoration Act) protections have been broadened by the Supreme Court and used by many religious conservatives to deny goods and services to those whose lifestyles and behaviors a business owner believes go against that business owner's personal religious beliefs. Using RFRA, an atheist group is working to get "In God We Trust" removed from U.S. currency. Their legal argument is based on a court ruling stating religious activity may not be substantially burdened without a compelling governmental interest, and laws narrowly tailored to that interest. The group argues that carrying an item on their body (money) containing a statement they disagree with violates their religious liberty. In another case, the Satanic Temple, a group in Missouri, has challenged that state's 72-hour abortion waiting period, saying it violated their sincerely held beliefs that "one's body is inviolable, subject to one's own will alone." (*Think Progress, 5/19/2015*)

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS** *continued*

introduced across the country in the first three months of 2015. (*Guttmacher Institute 5/2015*) Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker recently said he would sign a ban on all abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, without exceptions for rape or incest. He would also allow the father to sue a doctor who performs an abortion for “emotional and psychological distress” if he disagrees with the choice, regardless of his relationship with the woman having the procedure. Last month, Walker said that mandatory ultrasounds are “just a cool thing for women.” (*Talking Points Memo 5/27/2015*)

States across the country are enacting longer waiting periods, with 26 states requiring anywhere from 24 to 72 hours waiting periods. (*NPR 6/2/2015*)

The anti-choice members of Congress have been working just as hard as the states to restrict abortion. In May, the House passed the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, to ban abortions after 20 weeks. Passed during National Women’s Health Week, this vote was denounced by pro-choice groups who stated that passing an unconstitutional nationwide ban does not help women, rather it threatens their health and lives, and interferes in their personal medical decisions. This 20-week ban is based on a theory long refuted by the mainstream medical community that a fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks. Abortions after 20 weeks are rare, and usually follow diagnosis of severe fetal medical problems discovered by tests that can only be done at 20 weeks of pregnancy. (*Huffington Post 6/3/2015*) In cases of devastating fetal anomalies, which cause the families involved pain and anguish, abortion is often the best option in a short list of terrible choices. This ban would require women to carry a non-viable, dead, or dying fetus to term – up to 3 months, regardless of potential quality of life for the fetus or danger to the woman. (*Fusion 5/27/2015*) House Speaker John Boehner (OH-8) gave a rare and emotional floor speech in support of the bill. Senator and GOP Presidential candidate Lindsey Graham (R-SC) introduced it in the Senate. President Obama has promised to veto this legislation if it is passed. (*CNN 5/14/2015*)



**Anti-choice legislation actions over Memorial Day Weekend**

- **Alabama: Bill to ban abortion clinics within 2,000 feet of public school or campus**
- **West Virginia: Passed 20-week abortion ban**
- **Nevada: Advanced bill requiring parental notification if a minor seeks an abortion**
- **Texas: Working to overturn abortion rights for abused or neglected teenagers**

Source: Fusion

On May 29th, President Obama signed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act for 2015, aimed at curbing sex trafficking. (*The Hill 5/29/2015*) The GOP had threatened, but failed to add abortion restriction riders to the bill.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, a bipartisan bill, was introduced to protect pregnant workers from workplace discrimination. If passed, it would require employers to make reasonable accommodations so pregnant workers can continue working. “Women should have every right to reasonable workplace accommodations as they provide for their families and contribute to the economy,” said co-sponsor **Sen. Jeanne Shaheen** (D-NH). (*National Partnership for Women 6/1/2015*)

June 7th marked the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court case *Griswold v Connecticut*, which paved the way for *Roe v Wade* and established the right to privacy in the marital bedroom. This decision gave couples the right to use contraception, which has furthered women’s physical health, economic stability, and mobility. This case removed state interference in a woman’s decision when and if to start a family. However, despite the critical role birth control plays in a woman’s life, Congress, universities, and business owners are still trying to erect barriers for women to access birth control coverage. (*The Hill 6/1/2015*)

**Sen. Patty Murray** (D-WA) introduced legislation that would allow birth control to be sold over the counter and be covered by insurance without cost-sharing. This bill has over two dozen co-sponsors and the support of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The FDA has reported they are awaiting major drug companies to ask for over-the-counter designation for birth control. (*Marie Claire 6/10/2015*)

A federal appellate court upheld tough provisions of a Texas abortion law that will close most of the clinics in Texas. This will leave fewer than 12 clinics across 267,000 square miles, down from 41. Women’s rights groups say that these restrictions would pose an “undue burden” on the Constitutional right to an abortion. (*New York Times 6/9/2015*)

Lawmakers in both Houses of Congress backed the Broader Access to Contraceptives for Women in the Military bill. The annual defense policy bill says military clinics and hospitals must be able to dispense any method of contraception approved by the FDA. Women have complained they are sometimes unable to obtain contraceptives prescribed by their doctors, especially when they are deployed overseas. The House bill requires that military women should, whenever possible, have access to “a sufficient supply” that will last for their entire deployment. **Rep. Jackie Speier** (CA-13) said she pushed for the change because recent studies showed that women in the military had a higher rate of unplanned pregnancy than the general population. (*New York Times 5/19/2015*)

### BEYOND THE CORE *continued*

could change the atmosphere in classrooms and dorms and increase accidental shootings and suicides. Fights fueled by rage or alcohol can turn deadly, according to Retired Admiral William McRaven, chancellor of the University of Texas System. (*USA Today* 6/8/15) A favorite tactic for NRA-backed Representatives and Senators is to “sneak” gun amendments into Congressional appropriation bills. Some examples of these riders include: expanding public land where guns can be carried; allowing the army to distribute surplus semiautomatic handguns; and allowing felons to petition to have their gun permits restored. (*The Hill* 6/2/15) The 2016 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations bill did not contain any new gun riders.

The funding level for the National Instant Criminal Background Checks System (NICS) will remain the same, despite Congress’s lack of commitment to passing common sense gun laws. NICS is a database that helps determine if someone is eligible to purchase a firearm.

The first National Gun Violence Awareness day was held on June 2 to honor those killed or injured from gun violence. People were encouraged to wear orange to show their support for victims. Many celebrities, athletes and public leaders dressed in orange as a show of solidarity. The shooting death of 15-year-old Chicagoan Hadiya Pendleton, last February, sparked this day. Hadiya was fatally shot when she was mistaken by gang members as part of a rival gang. A week before her death, Hadiya marched in President Barack Obama’s second inaugural parade. First Lady Michelle Obama attended Hadiya’s funeral and spoke at the graduation ceremony at Hadiya’s school. The color orange was chosen because it is the color hunters wear to alert other hunters they’re not the targets. (*Newsweek* 6/2/15)



JAC members sport orange in support of National Gun Violence Awareness Day during the 2015 JAC Luncheon.

The Supreme Court declined to hear a case regarding a San Francisco ordinance requiring handguns be stored at home in a lock box or with a trigger lock. (*Yahoo News* 6/8/15) In essence, the Court allowed the law to stand and delivered a blow to the NRA. About two kids under the age of 14 are killed each week in accidental shootings, many of these deaths could have been prevented if the guns were locked. (*MTV* 6/1/15)

Gun violence has touched every neighborhood and aspect of our lives. After car accidents, gun violence is the second leading cause of death for people under the age of 20. One-third of Americans know someone who has been a victim of gun violence and an estimated one-fifth of American teens have seen someone shot. (*MTV* 6/1/15) Gun violence prevention has become an important issue for JAC. Through our advocacy work, we will continue to push for common sense gun laws.

### 2015 POWER OF WOMEN LUNCHEON



Our Co-Chairs and guest speaker Amy Kellogg. I to r: Susan Berk, Amy Kellogg, Ilene Tucker



I to r: JAC President Janna Berk, Communications Director Hollis Weir, 2015 Luncheon Co-Chair Susan Berk, 2015 Honoree Barbara Bluhm-Kaul, Keynote Speaker Amy Kellogg, 2015 Luncheon Co-Chair Ilene Tucker, Membership & Outreach Director Dana Gordon, Research Director Joy Malkus, Executive Director Marcia Balonick, Director of Special Projects Linda Rae Sher



This year’s honorees I to r: Leslie Bluhm, Barbara Bluhm-Kaul, and Meredith Bluhm-Wolf



Volunteer Coordinator Jacki Parmacek, with past Luncheon Co-Chairs Lisa Rubinstein and Laurie Lustbader.

Stay informed at [www.JACPAC.org](http://www.JACPAC.org)

### RESEARCH AND RACES



**Senator Michael Bennet** (D-CO) is running for his second full term in the U.S. Senate. Born in India where his father was an aide to the U.S. Ambassador, Bennet can trace his father's family roots back to the Mayflower and his mother's family survived the Holocaust. Bennet often speaks of his time as the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools. He is an avid proponent of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. He was a key advocate of former Israeli President Shimon Peres being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal; the first sitting President of Israel to receive this prestigious award. Bennet has a 100% rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America, and has stated, "Decisions about when to start a family and whether to terminate a pregnancy are extremely personal decisions, and should be made by a woman, her family, her faith, and her doctor, not the federal government." He supports reducing unintended

pregnancies by offering comprehensive sex education and increasing the availability of safe birth control and family planning services. JAC strongly supports Senator Bennet for reelection.



**Senator Richard Blumenthal** (D-CT) has become a strong and loud moral voice in the Senate, often leading the way on the U.S.-Israel relationship, women's reproductive rights, gun violence prevention, and immigration. "My dedication to the State of Israel is rooted in deep and longstanding personal ties to the nation and its people...[A] two-state solution is necessary to ensure Israel's continued existence as the homeland of the Jewish people, and provide security both for Israel and for the Palestinian people. However, before this objective can be met, it is essential that Palestinian leaders stop aiding terrorism...[and] they must recognize Israel's right to exist as an autonomous nation with Jerusalem as its capital." (*CT Jewish Ledger*) He is a leader on women's reproductive rights, introducing the Women's Health Protection Act, to protect a woman's right to safe and legal abortion by stopping

restrictive regulations and laws. He believes prompt action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must happen and he has been a leader in the Senate for gun violence prevention legislation. JAC strongly supports Sen. Blumenthal for reelection.



**Senator Patty Murray** (D-WA) was first elected to the Senate in 1992, becoming Washington state's first female Senator. She has been reelected three times. She has served as the Senate Majority Conference Secretary since 2007, making her the fourth highest-ranking Democrat and the highest-ranking woman in the Senate. She ran her first race as the "Mom in tennis shoes" in response to a disparaging remark from an opponent. Concerning the U.S.-Israel relationship, Murray co-sponsored a Resolution for Israeli Self-Defense, expressing vigorous support and unwavering commitment to the welfare, security, and survival of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure borders. Murray is a leader on women's issues and recently introduced a bill to make contraception

affordable and over the counter. Murray says, "I believe that every issue is a women's issue. I have spearheaded efforts to invest in women's health, protect reproductive rights, provide life-saving assistance to victims of domestic violence, close the pay gap, as well as increase access to child care. I remain committed to expanding opportunities for women ... across America." JAC strongly supports Senator Murray for reelection.



### YES! I will support JAC Candidates this election cycle. ELECTIONS MATTER.

I will support the following JAC-endorsed candidates to help them win in 2016.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the campaign of \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the campaign of \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the campaign of \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the campaign of \_\_\_\_\_

Please write the name and contribution amount for each candidate you wish to support in the spaces above and return in the enclosed envelope.

Personal check(s) payable to each campaign  Visa  Mastercard

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on the card \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Questions or to make a contribution over the phone, please contact the JAC office at 847.433.5999.



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, JACPAC cannot accept corporate contributions. Membership, gifts, or other payments to JACPAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Stay informed at [www.JACPAC.org](http://www.JACPAC.org)

## JAC Happenings Around the U.S.



JAC met with Congressional candidate Eric Lynn (FL-13).



A wonderful turnout for Talking Points Los Angeles with Representative Ted Lieu (CA-33) in May.



Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-21) with Merle Styer in Florida.



JAC members attended an Off the Sidelines event with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) in Chicago.



JAC members attended a DSCC breakfast with Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT), and Rep. Patrick Murphy (FL-18).



Communication Director Hollis Wein with Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3) and former Rep. Brad Schneider.



**Elections Matter**  
We support a strong U.S./Israel relationship, reproductive choice, and separation of religion and state.



JAC member Lisa Lickstein with Rep. Lois Frenkel (FL-22) and Rep. Steny Hoyer (MD-5) in Florida.



JAC members with Rep. John Lewis (GA-5) at Chicago Ideas Fest.

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### Upcoming JAC Events

- **Talking Points Highland Park**, August 13th featuring Rep. Ted Lieu (CA-33)
- **Talking Points Los Angeles**, August (date TBD)  
Details to come

Want to host a JAC event in your area? Contact the JAC office.  
847.433.5999 or info@jacpac.org

**For more information, go to [www.JACPAC.org](http://www.JACPAC.org).**