Speaking to Arabic language television station Al-Arabiya, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said “Everything is on the table...But we need to get to the table....I’m prepared to negotiate with President Abbas directly for peace between our two peoples right now. We can do it here in my home in Jerusalem, we can do it in Ramallah (in the West Bank.), we can do it anywhere.” Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians have been on hold since late September 2010. Palestinians said they would not renew direct negotiations until Israel renewed the freeze on settlement construction. Netanyahu declined. The reconciliation between Abbas’ Fatah party and Hamas threw another wrench into the mix. Netanyahu said it was impossible to seek peace with any group that does not recognize Israel’s right to exist and Hamas not only doesn’t recognize Israel’s right to exist but calls for it to be wiped off the face of the earth. Although, there may be a reconciliation, there still isn’t any agreement. An earlier meeting in Cairo between Fatah and Hamas failed to create a unity government. The two parties have agreed to try again later this month. In the meantime, Netanyahu is trying to restart talks and prevent, or at least delay, efforts to seek recognition of a Palestinian state by the United Nations. The United States has said it would veto recognition in the Security Council so the Palestinian Authority would have to go to the General Assembly. A positive vote in the General Assembly would be strictly symbolic, but it would boost the Palestinian cause around the world and could further isolate Israel. On July 7, the House voted 407-6 to reaffirm the United States commitment to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The resolution was introduced on May 13 by Eric Cantor (R-VA) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD).

The House Foreign Affairs Committee passed a foreign aid bill on July

**Israel**

**United States**

Since the early debates of last year’s Affordable Care Act, the fight over women’s reproductive health rights has remained central; however, the latest battle over contraception appears to just be warming up. The independent Institute of Medicine released a report on July 19th with recommendations about preventative health care for women within the context of the new healthcare law. The document released includes eight broad recommendations for generally strengthening preventative health care services that have the potential to greatly improve women’s health on a national scale. Government entities as well as experts in the private sector have long recognized contraceptive services as crucial and effective means of improving preventive and public health care, while research strongly advocates that the use of contraceptives helps women to avoid unintended pregnancy, improve birth spacing and generally demonstrates substantial benefits in the health and well-being of infants, women, and families.

These recommendations were compiled from an exhaustive review of evidence, and cover areas from a woman’s annual preventive care health visits, specific services for pregnant women and nursing mothers, counseling and screening for those affected by HIV and domestic violence, and services for the early detection of reproductive cancers and sexually transmitted diseases. IOM released these recommendations with the intent to encourage that important gaps be closed in existing services already covered in the healthcare reform law. If the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services endorses the recommendations outlined, private insurance plans will be required to cover the recommended services, including all contraceptive services and supplies approved by the FDA, without cost-sharing out-of-pocket costs, including co-pays or deductibles. However, even if the Depart-
Senators Bill Nelson (FL), Claire McCaskill (MO), Jon Tester (MT), Ben Nelson (NE) and Sherrod Brown (OH). All, except Nelson of Nebraska, who is not pro-choice, are JAC-supported. Crossroads GPS is a 501(c)(4), affiliated with the American with Crossroads “super PAC.” As a 501(c)(4), Crossroads GPS can accept unlimited contributions and doesn’t have to name its donors. It can only run issue-based ads. The state-specific ads feature an IPad like device on which each Democratic senator’s words on the budget and debt are contrasted with their records. A Democratic rival super PAC, Priorities USA, recently went up with $750,000 worth of its own ads to fight back against the Crossroads buy. (Washington Post, Morning Fix, 7/8/2011)

**Florida** -- A three-way GOP primary features former appointed Senator George LeMieux, state House Majority Leader Adam Hasner and former Ruth’s Chris CEO Craig Miller. JAC-supported Democratic Senator Bill Nelson leads by double digits although he is still under 50%.

**Massachusetts** -- There is speculation that Elizabeth Warren, the architect behind the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, created to police many financial products, could be recruited to challenge Republican Senator Scott Brown. Although Massachusetts is a “blue” state, this would be an uphill battle. Brown is a strong fundraiser and tireless campaigner.

**Michigan** -- JAC-supported Democrat Debbie Stabenow is running for her 3rd term. Perfect on all of JAC’s issues, she has been a recipient of JAC’s contributions since her days in the House. She is being challenged by former GOP Rep. Peter Hoekstra, who retired from the House in 2010 to make an unsuccessful run for Governor. He will be a formidable opponent. Hoekstra was the ranking GOP member of the Intelligence Committee.

**New Mexico** - Open - Democratic Senator Jeff Bingaman is retiring. Both parties will have competitive primaries. On the Republican side, there appears to be a four-way race between former Rep. Heather Wilson, Lt. Gov. John Sanchez, businessman Greg Sowards and businessman Bill English. The real race is between Wilson and Sanchez. Democrats are looking at a three-way primary featuring Rep. Martin Heinrich, state Auditor Hector Balderas and activist Andres Valdez. JAC has supported Heinrich. Anglo versus Hispanic could become an important factor given the state’s 45% Hispanic population.

**Wisconsin** - Open - GOP Senator Herb Kohl is retiring. This is a GOP take-over opportunity in a state that elected a GOP Senator (ousting 3-term Senator Russ Feingold) and a GOP Governor in 2010. With no frontrunners in either party, this a “toss-up” down to the wire. Former Gov. Tommy Thompson is the likely GOP nominee. Democratic Rep. Tammy Baldwin is eyeing the race. She could face a primary challenge from Rep. Ron Kind, whose voting record is more centrist than hers.

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20 which would slice $6.4 billion from the administration’s $51 billion request for 2012. The committee’s measure retains $3 billion in military aid for Israel but makes aid to Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority contingent on the administrations “certifying that no members of terrorist organizations or their sympathizers were serving in their governments.” The bill also holds up security and civilian aid to Pakistan unless the administration “certified that Pakistan was making progress on fighting terrorism.” Amendments to the bill cut Washington’s contribution to the UN by 25% and eliminated U.S. dues to the Organization of American States. The bill also reinstated the “Mexico City” rule, which would eliminate federal funding for any non-governmental group that provides family planning and abortion counseling abroad. Rep. Howard Berman (CA), the ranking Democrat on the committee, said the bill had a “Fortress America” tone and reflected the “decline of a bipartisan center that existed in the House in the past.” Conservative members would never have thought of pulling out of the OAS or capping funds for U.N. peacekeeping forces. (Washington Post 7/20/2011)