

JAC's 2018 Year-End Report



Save the Date
March 13-14, 2019

Join JAC in Washington, D.C. 2019 Annual Meeting

For JAC, 2018 was a year filled with legislative, judicial, and ballot box battles. We fought against defunding Planned Parenthood, Brett Kavanaugh's appointment to the Supreme Court, and repealing the ACA. This was all with the goal to protect JACPAC's issues — a strong U.S. Israel relationship, reproductive freedom and the separation of religion and state.

We also traveled the country knocking on doors, encouraging voters to go to the polls and vote for our candidates. We ran remote phone banks when we couldn't visit districts in person. Helping to get-out-the-vote made a difference. Every vote counts. Many JAC candidates won by just one to two percent.

JACPAC showed our power by participating in gun violence prevention and other marches across the country. When we stand together, united, we are a powerful voice for change.



JAC members getting out the vote for Rep-Elect Susie Lee (NV-3)

With your support, JACPAC was able to contribute to 110 races during the 2018 midterm election. We are proud to send 84 Members to Congress from 34 states. We will continue to have strong advocates for JACPAC's issues. A record number of women, many with military backgrounds, will begin serving in Congress this January. They bring a new sense of purpose to health care, family leave policy, sexual harassment, child abuse and other critical issues that disproportionately affect women.



JACII members at JAC's Detroit Membership Meeting with Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) and Reps Debbie Dingell & Andy Levin

With the Democrats in solid control of the House of Representatives, we can hopefully begin to see real progress on protection for women's reproductive rights, gun violence prevention, and many other issues. The challenge will be in the Senate, where the Democrats now only have 45 seats.

We are happy to welcome to the Senate JAC-friends Jacky Rosen (NV) and Kyrsten Sinema (AZ). Unfortunately, our friends Sen. Bill Nelson (FL) and Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (ND) were defeated in this election.

We have started JACII groups in Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles. This is a great way for young professionals to get involved with JAC and meet other politically committed people. Please contact the JAC office for more information. We can also help start a group near you.

Other highlights from the 2018 year: The Joint Action Committee (our 501c4 advocacy organization) annual meeting in Washington, DC was held in March. JAC members from across the country gathered to meet with leading Members of Congress, received policy briefings, and attended an intimate dinner at the home of Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

Save the date for JAC's 2019 Washington, DC meeting March 13-14. (Details to follow.) This will be a unique opportunity to visit with the candidates we help send to Congress.

In June, our JAC Power of Women fundraising luncheon in Chicago featured Fred Guttenberg, whose daughter Jaime was killed during the Parkland, FL shooting. Our theme, "Do Something," was a call to action. We each have a personal responsibility to become involved in our communities to end gun violence. More than 400 guests attended our luncheon, helping to raise critical dollars for JAC's work.



JAC members at the Chicago March for Our Lives

The JAC Education Foundation (501c3) published the 2017-2018 Jewish Community Voter's Guide, tracking key Congressional votes on issues important to the Jewish Community.



JAC II LA with Rep-Elect Mike Levin

JAC's success on issues you care about begins with you. Your membership enables us to support candidates and offer programs. If you are already a member, please consider an additional donation. Now is a great time to renew your membership, as well. Our work at JAC is never done. We cannot take anything for granted and we must diligently protect our issues and candidates.

We look forward to your participation in 2019. Again, thank you for your continued support and interest.

U.S.-Israel Relationship

While there has been no progress on a permanent peace plan, bipartisan support for Israel remains strong. The House and Senate passed a bipartisan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will cement U.S. military aid to Israel for the next 10 years. Israel will receive \$38 billion in military aid over the next 10 years and an additional \$500 million for cooperative missile defense.



JAC Executive Director Marcia Balonick with Israel Consul General to the Midwest Aviv Ezra

Tensions between Israel and Syria, with strong Russian and Iranian influence continues to threaten Israel. Hezbollah's recent attempt to tunnel under the Lebanese border into Israel shows that the group is a clear danger to Israel, and the balance of power in the Middle East. Thanks to support from Congress, Israel received the necessary funds to improve their anti-tunneling efforts.

Separation of Religion & State

Hoping to please the religious right, President Trump has taken several steps this year to weaken the separation between religion and state. Trump, with his Evangelical Advisory Board by his side, signed an executive order establishing a White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative in May. This is widely seen as a license to discriminate based on religion with approval from the federal government.

Trump also created the Division of Conscience and Religious Freedom at the Department of Health and Human Services to protect doctors, nurses and other health care workers who refuse to take part in procedures like abortion or to treat patients because of moral or religious objections.

Many of Trump's top officials blur the lines between religion and state as well. Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions used the Bible to justify Trump's policy of separating migrant children from their parents.

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos said while visiting a New York charter school that, "some states will need more prayers and more action than others to bring about needed changes."

Reproductive Freedom

This was a pivotal year for choice. With the nomination and subsequent appointment of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, the fate of *Roe v Wade* hangs in the balance. The court now likely has the 5-4 majority to overturn this landmark case.



JAC members at the 2018 Women's March in Chicago

While this is definitely good news, it also signals the Supreme Court's hesitancy to take up abortion-related cases thereby giving the lower courts a greater say in our reproductive freedom.

With a pro-choice House, Trump will sidestep Congress to pursue his anti-choice agenda. He can use the rule-making process to institute damaging policies throughout the federal government.

Trump is proposing new onerous rules on Title X clinics, which include Planned Parenthood. By creating an undue burden, facilities may need to close. Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and preventative health services. Federal funds cannot be used for abortions. However, clinics can provide abortions using private funds.

Gun Violence Prevention

There have been more than 300 mass shootings to date this year. Center for Disease Control data for 2017 shows that the number of Americans dying from gunshots rose for the third year in a row. After each mass shooting, Congress pledges to do something. The Administration's answer to the Parkland school shooting was to arm teachers.



JAC member Merle Styer at the March for Our Lives in Jupiter, FL

Congress did not pass any common sense gun laws in 2018. Consensus couldn't even be reached about closing background check loopholes, even though a majority of people favor them. Americans' frustration with a Congress controlled by the NRA boiled over at the ballot box. NRA-backed candidates were defeated in November, paving the way for meaningful efforts to make our communities safer.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-semitism continued to be a problem here and abroad. A record number of right-wing extremist candidates with outspoken anti-Semitic views ran for Congress. The former head of the American Nazi Party ran as a Republican in Illinois and even received 26 percent of the vote.

Studies have shown that over a fifth of millennials in the United States have not, or are unsure if they have, heard of the Holocaust. In Europe, 34 percent of Europeans polled by CNN said they knew "little or nothing" about the Holocaust.

20% of millennials have not heard of the Holocaust

The Pittsburgh synagogue shooting is a tragic reminder that anti-Semitism is an on-going threat to our communities. Extreme political discourse that condones violence and racial and religious bigotry is a threat to all. We must continue to demand that our elected leaders embrace the values of tolerance and acceptance.

Climate Change

Trump's own climate change report involving 13 federal agencies and more than 300 leading climate scientists confirms the imminent catastrophic impact of climate change. But Trump still doesn't believe his own report and the scientific data.

Two historic-sized hurricanes made landfall in the United States, while the eastern Pacific saw the greatest number of storms on record. The 2018 wildfire season is the most destructive and deadly wildfire season on record in California. Leading scientist have attributed these disasters to dangerous climate changes.

But Trump continues to rollback and eliminate protections for our air, land and water, with plans to do more.

Courts

Trump has appointed 85 judges to the federal bench. These judges are mostly young, white males with hard-line conservative positions. They will serve for life. Trump is packing the court at an alarming rate with ideologues favored by Evangelicals and the far right. The result will be a court that will impact our lives with rulings for generations to come.

Courts matter. An appeals court upheld a New Jersey ban on high-capacity magazines. The 2-1 ruling was decided by two Barack Obama appointed judges. The judge who blocked the Trump administration from denying asylum claims to immigrants who cross the border illegally was also appointed by Obama.

Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs (JACPAC) is a pro-Israel PAC with a domestic agenda. We support a strong U.S.-Israel relationship and advocate for reproductive health, the separation of religion and state, and incorporate other issues of importance to the Jewish community, including gun violence prevention and climate change. In addition to providing financial support for U.S. Senate and House campaigns, JACPAC educates our membership with outreach events designed to inform and activate their participation in the political process.