



Proposed Resolutions

for the

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1 **PROPOSED RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION**
2 **REFORM IN THE UNITED STATES**

3
4 Submitted by the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
5 to the 69th Union for Reform Judaism General Assembly
6

7 **BACKGROUND**
8

9 American immigration policy has long reflected the tension between those who seek to welcome
10 new immigrants and those who seek to limit their entry into the United States. Historically the
11 Jewish community has identified closely with those supporting opportunities for newcomers. As
12 noted in the 1995 Resolution on Immigration adopted by the Union of American Hebrew
13 Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism), “we support those efforts that
14 compassionately seek to regulate and to aid newcomers to this land but we oppose those that will
15 unduly restrict immigration or burden the lives of illegal immigrants.” Other resolutions adopted
16 by the Union related to the status and treatment of immigrants include Refugees in Canada
17 (1989), Immigration (1989) and Citizenship (1997).
18

19 **Jewish Texts and Values**

20 Both our Jewish tradition and our historical experiences lead us to support immigration policy
21 that is compassionate and fair. The Torah teaches us to reach out to and care for vulnerable
22 populations, including non-citizens and resident aliens: “If your brother, being in straits, comes
23 under your authority, and you hold him as though a resident alien, let him live by your side”
24 (Leviticus 25:35). We are repeatedly commanded to care for the needy within our extended
25 family: “If there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements...
26 do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. Rather, you must open
27 your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs” (Deut. 15:7). Rabbinic Judaism also
28 entitled non-Jewish individuals to financial and emotional support from the Jewish community in
29 order to create a harmonious society: “Our rabbis have taught: ‘we support the poor of the non-
30 Jew along with the poor of Israel, and visit the sick of the non-Jew along with the sick of Israel,
31 and bury the poor of the non-Jew along with the dead of Israel, in the interests of peace’” (BT
32 Gittin 61a).
33

34 Our historical experience also sensitizes Jews to the need of family members to extend a helping
35 hand to one another, even across borders, in times of economic hardship. As told in the Book of
36 Genesis, during the difficult years of famine throughout the Middle East, Joseph’s position in
37 Egypt made possible the resettlement and survival of his family: “God has sent me ahead of you
38 to ensure your survival on earth, and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance... come
39 down to me without delay—you and your children and your grandchildren, your flocks and
40 herds, and all that is yours. There I will provide for you...” (Genesis 45). The Book of Ruth
41 similarly personalizes the required response of the Jewish community toward the immigrant.
42 Ruth, the impoverished recent arrival to her new land, gleanes alongside full Israelite citizens who
43 are also in need—a privilege to which Ruth is entitled once she adopts her new homeland and
44 links her fate with its citizens. From the patriarchs’ and matriarchs’ sojourns in foreign lands to
45 our seminal experience as strangers in Egypt, the plight of the non-citizen resonates for Jews.
46

47 Our obligations to resettle family members apply only to our own extended family, and not to
48 others. Taken literally, we might conclude that these mandates only obligate us to work for the
49 resettlement of Jews. However, our desire to care for members of our own extended family
50 sensitizes us to similar claims for family reunification expressed by other immigrant groups in
51 America. Further, our historical memory of dangerous flights in search of safe havens inspires a
52 desire to help others in similar distress. The Union reaffirmed these views most recently by
53 adopting the 2003 Resolution on Civil Liberties, which states our opposition to “measures that
54 strip the power of immigration and federal judges to review decisions and exercise discretion
55 regarding the status, detention, and deportation of non-citizens.”

56
57 As a community of immigrants and refugees with a long history of sojourning in foreign lands,
58 American Jews have a unique responsibility to ensure that the rights of non-citizens are protected
59 by our nation’s immigration policy. Just as our ancestors were permitted to reunite their families
60 and resettle refugees from their lands of origin to their newly adopted homelands, today’s
61 immigrant communities deserve similar opportunities.

62
63 **Today’s Immigration System**
64 Despite a sweeping overhaul of the United States’ immigration policy a decade ago, it is clear
65 that our immigration system is still inequitable. There are currently nearly 12 million individuals
66 living in the U.S. without legal status.¹ Chronic backlogs in visa distribution result in families
67 being separated for years. While “immediate relatives” face the shortest wait for visas, those in
68 lower preference categories are plagued by delays as long as 11 years.² Employment-based visas
69 are available in numbers too small to meet either employer demands or accommodate the
70 laborers available for work.³ Unauthorized crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border—aggravated by
71 Border Patrol strategies—have led to a record number of deaths in the past year alone.⁴

72
73 The failure to address these problems within our current immigration system has created an
74 enforcement vacuum, too often leading non-federal authorities to attempt to enforce federal
75 immigration law.⁵ In addition to the humanitarian issues these problems create, domestic
76 security can be undermined when so many people live in the shadows of society and are unable
77 or unwilling to work cooperatively with law enforcement agencies. We cannot ignore the
78 economic, social, and human reality of these “strangers” who are, in fact, our neighbors.

79
80 **The Current Immigration Debate**
81 Recent discussion in Congress has reflected the historic tensions in our immigration policy.
82 Debate in both the House and Senate has primarily focused on two approaches: 1) legislation that
83 promotes enforcement or border security measures exclusively (the “enforcement-only”
84 approach) and 2) legislation that promotes security measures but also includes a path to earned

¹ Pew Hispanic Center. Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.
<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=61>.

²<http://www.immigrationforum.org/documents/TheDebate/ImmigrationReform/FamilyBacklogBackgrounder.pdf>.

³ Paral, Rob. American Immigration Law Foundation. “No Way In: U.S. Immigration Policy Leaves few Legal Options for Mexican Workers.” July 2005. <http://www.aifl.org/ipc/nowayin.asp>.

⁴ Pan, Esther. Council on Foreign Relations. “Q&A: Homeland Security: U.S.-Mexico Border Woes.” February 22, 2006. <http://www.ccis-ucsd.org/news/ NYT2-22-06.pdf>.

⁵ Turque, Bill. *Washington Post*. “Officials Face Constitutional Complexities.” September 7, 2007.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/06/AR2007090602482.html>.

85 citizenship for undocumented immigrants, along with measures to ensure that those who came
86 here illegally make appropriate restitution (the “comprehensive immigration reform” approach).
87 In October 2006, President Bush signed into law the Secure Fence Act embodying the
88 enforcement-only approach. The law authorizes the construction of 700 miles of fencing along
89 the U.S.-Mexico border.

90
91 Measures designed solely to keep immigrants out of the U.S. ignore the domestic and global
92 forces that lead to rising levels of immigration. A truly comprehensive immigration policy must
93 address these circumstances. In the U.S., undocumented immigrants are concentrated primarily
94 in low-skilled, low-paying jobs in the service sector.⁶ Contrary to arguments of those who claim
95 that there are fewer job opportunities available for American workers because of the high rate of
96 illegal immigration, undocumented immigrants often fill positions others are unwilling to take.
97 By doing so, they play a vital role in the American economy. In addition, immigrants, including
98 many undocumented workers, pay federal income taxes and contribute to Social Security. In fact,
99 the Social Security Administration estimates that three-quarters of undocumented immigrants
100 pay Social Security taxes, even though they are ineligible for benefits.⁷

101
102 Advocates of a comprehensive approach to immigration reform believe that an earned
103 legalization program would 1) be more humane than the alternatives, 2) grant new immigrants
104 the opportunities that generations of immigrants to the United States have enjoyed, 3)
105 acknowledge that undocumented workers meet our demand for essential workers, and 4) broaden
106 the tax base by integrating millions of new workers into the above-ground economy. They also
107 stress that a program of earned legalization for undocumented residents would enhance
108 cooperation with law enforcement officials by members of the immigrant community who would
109 no longer fear deportation, likely resulting in reduced crime and improved national security.⁸

110
111 Even some provisions in Comprehensive Immigration Reform proposals would create
112 unreasonable family and economic hardships for those seeking to legalize their status. For
113 example, proposals that would provide visas to those who are currently undocumented by
114 requiring immigrants to first leave the U.S. and return to their country of origin, known as
115 “touchback,” are unreasonable.

116
117 A comprehensive approach to reforming our nation’s immigration system is the most realistic
118 and humane solution to this escalating crisis. Such an approach takes into account not only the
119 importance of securing our nation’s borders and upholding the law, but also the fact that millions
120 of undocumented immigrants currently live in the shadows of society where they are potential
121 targets for unscrupulous employers. They live in fear of law enforcement and thus are afraid to
122 report crimes, including domestic violence, or threats to our nation’s security. And they face

⁶ Pew Hispanic Center. Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.
<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=61>.

⁷ Porter, Eduardo. New York Times. “Illegal Immigrants Are Bolstering Social Security With Billions.” April 5,
2005.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/05/business/05immigration.html?ex=1270353600&en=78c87ac4641dc383&ei=5090>.

⁸ National Council of LaRaza. Waskin, Michele. “Immigration Enforcement by Local Police: The Impact on the
Civil Rights of Latinos.” February 2003. <http://www.nclr.org/content/publications/download/1390>.

123 obstacles to obtaining needed health care, posing a threat to public health.⁹ When local law
124 enforcement agents or health care professionals are required to enforce federal immigration law,
125 it undermines their ability to work cooperatively with the immigrant community on such issues.
126 Providing opportunities for the undocumented to eventually become legal citizens after meeting
127 specific requirements is a necessary component of comprehensive immigration reform.
128

129 **THEREFORE**, the Union for Reform Judaism resolves to:

- 130
- 131 1. Call for a comprehensive and generous United States immigration policy that treats all
- 132 immigrants justly and reflects the basic principles of human dignity and human rights;
- 133 2. Oppose enforcement-only legislation while maintaining support for effective and
- 134 humane border security to curb illegal immigration as part of a comprehensive
- 135 immigration policy;
- 136 3. Support legislation providing for pathways to earned citizenship for undocumented
- 137 immigrants that reflect fair and compassionate eligibility standards;
- 138 4. Call for Congress and the Administration to adopt:
 - 139 a. Fair and expeditious processes to deal with the problems of visa backlogs and
 - 140 family separation, and
 - 141 b. Provisions that would allow undocumented immigrants in the process of applying
 - 142 for legal status to remain in the U.S.;
- 143 5. Support measures to clarify that enforcement of federal immigration law is the
- 144 exclusive province of the appropriate federal legal authorities by:
 - 145 a. Opposing efforts by non-federal entities and local law enforcement officers to
 - 146 enforce federal immigration law;
 - 147 b. Opposing efforts by non-federal entities to establish punitive regulations or
 - 148 legislation targeting undocumented immigrants;
- 149 6. Support legislation that recognizes the contribution of immigrants to the U.S. economy
- 150 and labor force by providing increased opportunities for immigrants to work legally in
- 151 the United States through temporary worker visas;
- 152 7. Support legislation and policies that address the causes of illegal immigration
- 153 including legislation that:
 - 154 a. Increases the number of visas allowing unskilled laborers to work in the U.S.
 - 155 legally;
 - 156 b. Increases guest worker programs and temporary worker visas; and
 - 157 c. Addresses the U.S. policies that contribute to the flow of immigrants;
- 158 8. Oppose the exploitation of immigrants in the workplace and encourage employers to
- 159 maintain the highest safety standards and provide fair and just compensation for all
- 160 workers;
- 161 9. Encourage congregations and other arms of the Reform Movement to:
 - 162 a. Educate their own members and the broader community on the important and
 - 163 beneficial role that immigrants play in our nation's economic, social and cultural
 - 164 life and the need for a fair, compassionate and comprehensive immigration policy;

⁹ Center for American Progress. King, Meredith, L. "Immigrants in the U.S. Health Care System: 5 Myths That Misinform the American Public." June 7, 2007.
http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/06/pdf/immigrant_health_report.pdf

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- b. Participate in coalitions that advocate comprehensive immigration reform consistent with these principles; and
- c. Assist immigrants to integrate into local communities, while recognizing and respecting the importance of preserving immigrant culture and heritage.

1 **PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**

2
3 Submitted by the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
4 to the 69th Union for Reform Judaism General Assembly

5
6 **BACKGROUND**

7
8 As Jews, we are intimately acquainted with what happens when otherwise good people are silent
9 in the face of political oppression and violence. Our tradition teaches us that human life is sacred
10 because all of humanity is created *b'tselem elohim*, in the image of God (Gen 1:26). Further, the
11 Torah makes clear that we have an obligation to preserve the sanctity of life by speaking out in
12 response to oppression and brutality in our world. In the Holiness Code, we are told that we
13 “may not stand idly by when [our] neighbor's blood is being shed" (Leviticus 19:16). As the
14 Babylonian Talmud states:

15
16 Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of his own family and does
17 not do so is punished for the transgressions of his family. Whoever is able to
18 protest against the transgressions of the people of his community and does not do
19 so is punished for the transgressions of his community. Whoever is able to protest
20 against the transgressions of the entire world and does not do so is punished for
21 the transgressions of the entire world. (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 54b)

22
23 The Reform Jewish Movement is committed to fulfilling this obligation by raising awareness of,
24 and speaking out against, human rights abuses wherever they exist.

25
26 In a 1939 resolution, the Union for Reform Judaism (then the UAHC) established our
27 commitment to human rights, maintaining that “every human being is entitled to live unmolested
28 and to enjoy inalienable rights in the land in which he was born or in which he has dwelt
29 lawfully.”

30
31 Since then, we have also spoken out against Apartheid (1979), Sweatshops and Child Labor
32 (1997), the Crisis in Sudan (2004), Global Poverty (2005), and Torture (2005) and worked to
33 promote The Genocide Convention (1979), Human Rights In Cuba (2003), International
34 Religious Freedom (2003), and Workers’ Rights in the United States (2005). Most
35 comprehensively, our 1999 Commitment to Africa resolution resolves to promote “basic
36 international human rights, including, but not limited to political organization, free assembly,
37 free speech, health care, family planning and reproductive freedom, education, a healthy
38 environment, women’s rights and labor rights, and the elimination of hunger and poverty.”

39
40 Since the post-World War II emergence of modern international human rights laws and treaties,
41 there have been scores of international agreements enacted establishing the standards by which
42 nations must abide. After the creation of the United Nations and the drafting of the Universal
43 Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, treaties were established to protect the rights of women,
44 children, and migrant workers, to end racial discrimination, and to outlaw torture. These became
45 the foundation of international human rights law, a set of international rules on the basis of
46 which individuals and groups can claim rights that are to be protected by governments. Human

47 rights are inherent entitlements which belong to every human being. The UN has adopted over
48 twenty treaties on human rights including, among others:

- 49 • The International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social,
50 and Cultural Rights (1966);
- 51 • Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948);
- 52 • Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1950);
- 53 • International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
54 (1965);
- 55 • The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1976) —
56 signed but not yet ratified by the U.S.;
- 57 • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
58 (1979)—signed but not yet ratified by the U.S.;
- 59 • Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or
60 Punishment (1984);
- 61 • Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)—signed but not yet ratified by the U.S.;
- 62 and
- 63 • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007) —neither signed nor
64 ratified by the U.S and signed but not yet ratified by Canada.

65
66 In addition to these human rights laws, there is another body of international law known as
67 international humanitarian law, which refers to a set of international rules established by treaty or
68 custom that protect human rights during armed conflicts. Humanitarian law ensures that the
69 rights of all persons who may be affected by armed conflict are protected, and limits the means
70 that parties can use during war. International humanitarian law includes the four Geneva
71 Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977.

72
73 Governments have the primary obligation to protect human rights in their sovereign territory. In
74 the absence of a national response, the international community has responded to human rights
75 and humanitarian law violations through a variety of legal and political means: the Nuremburg
76 and Tokyo trials, international ad hoc tribunals in Yugoslavia and Rwanda, truth commissions in
77 Chile and South Africa, and courts of mixed jurisdiction in Sierra Leone and Cambodia.
78 Additionally, there are several regional human rights bodies around the world, such as the
79 European Court on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which
80 interpret and apply regional human rights documents. The International Court of Justice in The
81 Hague (ICJ), created in 1945, tries countries, rather than individuals, for war crimes. All UN
82 member states are automatically parties to the court. Despite accepting compulsory jurisdiction
83 by the ICJ in 1946, the United States withdrew in 1986 and now accepts the Court's jurisdiction
84 only on a case-by-case basis.

85
86 In 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was created as the first permanent international
87 court to try individuals for crimes against humanity.¹⁰ The ICC, which hears cases upon referral
88 from the UN Security Council or upon acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction by a State Party or
89 a State, is able to bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against humanity who would otherwise

¹⁰ In contrast to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which tries countries, the International Criminal Court (ICC) holds individuals accountable for gross human rights abuses.

90 go unpunished. Currently, the ICC is formally investigating human rights atrocities committed in
91 Uganda and those responsible for the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. The Court announced in
92 January 2007 that it was ready to proceed with its first trial against warlord Thomas Lubanga
93 Dyilo of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Cases likely to be considered in the near future
94 concern individuals involved in atrocities in the Central African Republic and the Ivory Coast.
95

96 The Rome Statute is the international provision that sets the legal basis for the International
97 Criminal Court. Canada has already ratified the Rome Statute, but the United States has not yet
98 ratified it on the grounds that it would curtail U.S. sovereignty and put U.S. soldiers deployed in
99 conflicts or as peacekeepers across the globe at risk of prosecution. Supporters respond that the
100 United States had a major role in the establishment of the legal precedents of the ICC, including
101 the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials; they also point to the success of the existing safeguards, such as
102 the doctrine of “complimentarity” through which the ICC defers to national courts in countries
103 that are willing and able to investigate and prosecute war crimes committed by their own
104 citizens. They also point to the limited jurisdiction of the Court and its record of rejecting
105 inappropriate cases, such as the dismissal of all cases against UK soldiers in Iraq.
106

107 Human rights groups have been particularly troubled by U.S. threats to cut aid to nations
108 cooperating with the ICC and to otherwise attempt to obstruct the ICC’s functioning. We
109 acknowledge and are concerned by the political posturing of international bodies that have
110 disproportionately and inaccurately singled out Israel for criticism. However, we believe that the
111 wisest way to protect the United States and Israel’s interests, and to advance the cause of
112 international justice, is to maintain U.S. engagement with the International Criminal Court and to
113 work cooperatively with other governments to ensure that the ICC remains a court of integrity
114 and fairness.
115

116 Despite an increasingly sophisticated international legal system, human rights abuses continue
117 around the world. Today we are faced with genocide in Sudan; trafficking of men, women and
118 children; abusive labor conditions; discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, and
119 political opinion; and approximately 150 countries that still practice torture or ill-treatment of
120 captives.¹¹ Although the United Nations has attempted to confront these challenges, the UN
121 Human Rights Council, established in April 2006 to replace the failed Human Rights
122 Commission, continues to fail to act decisively on severe human rights abuses such as those in
123 Darfur, while condemning Israel on multiple occasions. In addition to its unbalanced approach, a
124 number of member states on the Council have very poor human rights records.
125

126 As North American Jews, we enjoy unparalleled religious, political, and social freedom. Our
127 Jewish values and history teach us that our privilege must not blind us to the millions of people
128 around the world who are denied fundamental human rights. For these reasons, a comprehensive
129 declaration of our commitment to international human rights and the tools used to achieve and
130 protect such rights is necessary.
131

132 **THEREFORE**, the Union for Reform Judaism resolves to:

- 133
134 1. Call upon the United States, Canada, and all the governments of the world to:

¹¹ Amnesty International. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/about.html>.

- 135 a. End all human rights abuses;
- 136 b. Ratify international treaties, conventions and declarations (“international human
- 137 rights agreements”) that promote human rights;
- 138 c. Ensure that the content, interpretation and enforcement of all such international
- 139 human rights agreements treat all countries fairly and do not inappropriately
- 140 single out Israel or any other country;
- 141 d. Hold themselves and each other to commitments arising from their ratification of
- 142 international agreements as they apply to human rights;
- 143 2. Call upon the United States and Canadian governments to:
- 144 a. Abide by the human rights principles of the international human rights
- 145 agreements to which they are signatories;
- 146 b. Abide by international humanitarian law; and
- 147 c. Support the enforcement of human rights and international humanitarian law
- 148 around the world;
- 149 3. Call upon the United States government to ratify the international human rights
- 150 agreements it has signed, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and
- 151 Cultural Rights; the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against
- 152 Women; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to sign and ratify the
- 153 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- 154 4. Call upon the Canadian government to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons
- 155 with Disabilities;
- 156 5. Support appropriate actions to protect human rights by the International Court of Justice,
- 157 ad hoc tribunals, truth commissions, mixed courts, or other regionally appropriate bodies;
- 158 6. Support the International Criminal Court and call for the United States to ratify the Rome
- 159 Statute; and
- 160 7. Promote appropriate actions to implement and enforce international human rights law and
- 161 international humanitarian law such as targeted sanctions, arms embargoes, deployment
- 162 of peacekeeping forces, humanitarian assistance, and socially responsible business and
- 163 investment practices that will create a sustainable peace in conflict areas and eliminate
- 164 the circumstances that allow human rights abuses to occur.
- 165

1 **PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

2
3 Submitted by the National Association of Temple Administrators, the Commission on Social
4 Action of Reform Judaism and the Commission on Synagogue Management
5 to the 69th Union for Reform Judaism General Assembly
6

7 *The Talmud tells us that the first question a person will be asked by the heavenly court after he*
8 *or she dies will be: “Did you deal honestly in business?” Shabbat 31a*
9

10 **BACKGROUND**

11
12 Judaism has a longstanding commitment to the fair and just treatment of workers. Torah teaches
13 that “[t]he wages of a laborer shall not remain with you until morning” (Leviticus 19:13)
14 and “[y]ou shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow Israelite or a stranger in
15 one of the communities of your land” (Deuteronomy 24:14-15). The Talmud teaches, “The path
16 to Jewish wisdom can be through the business world” (Niddah 60b).
17

18 Inspired by these ancient teachings, the Union for Reform Judaism has debated and approved
19 resolutions that call upon congregations, the Union, and its affiliates to adopt specific ethical
20 practices within their own business operations, particularly in the arena of employment practices.
21 In 1992 the Union adopted a resolution on gender equality which, in part, called “upon all
22 UAHC congregations to actively uphold the policy of non-discrimination based on gender in all
23 employment practices, including hiring and promoting rabbis, cantors, educators, administrators,
24 social workers and other professionals.” In the Union’s 1999 Resolution on Living Wage
25 Campaigns, the Union called upon “our congregations and all arms of the Reform Movement to
26 examine their employment and contracting practices to ensure that they reflect the spirit of this
27 [living wage] resolution.” The 1999 resolution defined the “living wage” as no less than the
28 poverty line for a family of four. What is considered a living wage can vary, depending on the
29 cost of living in a given community, and is typically higher than the minimum wage, but it is
30 generally calculated based on the assumption (whether or not it is true for a particular worker),
31 that a worker is working full-time, year-round. In 2001, the Union adopted a resolution
32 concerning mental health that urged “member congregations and the UAHC to provide health
33 coverage for employees that guarantees parity in mental health coverage.” Even when certain
34 ethical practices would result in expenditures of additional funds, we nonetheless have called
35 upon our members to implement them, such as the 1978 resolution that called upon our
36 congregations to modify their facilities to be accessible to members and staff with disabilities.
37

38 In addition to these resolutions that directly affect employees of congregations and arms of the
39 Reform Movement, the Movement has adopted numerous resolutions and spoken out on national
40 and local labor issues that reflect our commitment to economic justice. These policies impact
41 businesses throughout our communities, including those we retain to perform work for our
42 synagogues and other institutions. For example, we have spoken out on family leave, sweatshop
43 labor, the status of farm workers, and the right of workers to unionize. We have called upon
44 congregations and Union affiliates to implement consumer practices that support labor rights by
45 purchasing fair trade and ‘sweat-free’ products. The Reform Movement and individual
46 congregations have participated in living wage campaigns that advocate state and local laws

47 requiring contractors or subcontractors of government services to pay their full-time employees a
48 wage that allows them to live above the poverty level.

49
50 As a Movement dedicated to fair labor practices, evidenced most recently by the Resolution on
51 Workers' Rights adopted in Houston in 2005, we must routinely examine our own internal
52 practices and policies. Our congregations are best served as sacred communities when our
53 employment practices—including contracts, job expectations, training, family leave policies,
54 hiring and transitioning procedures—reflect Jewish values. Employees and members are engaged
55 in a sacred partnership with a shared commitment to maintain a thriving, vibrant, and holy
56 congregation. The business operations of our institutions should reflect this holiness as well.

57
58 The nurturing and care of synagogue employees is one of the most sacred responsibilities of any
59 congregation. *Derech Eretz* (doing what it takes to make others feel respected) is a principle that
60 can guide many of the employment policies and practices of our synagogues, including those
61 related to the maintenance staff, administrative support or part-time employees who contribute
62 much to the daily life of the synagogue and deserve the highest level of respect. The employees
63 who may be least visible to our members nonetheless provide crucial support to the operation of
64 our congregations, and it is important that their human needs not be neglected or undervalued.

65
66 Ethical labor practices dictate that all synagogue employees should receive compassionate and
67 appropriate treatment. Yet setting goals for the Union, our congregations and Union affiliates
68 also must reflect what is financially feasible given tight budgets and limited resources. Many
69 factors must be considered when running an organization, preparing its budget and setting salary
70 and benefits packages. Employers will, of necessity, distinguish between full and part-time
71 employees, professional and support staff, and long and short term employees. We are well
72 aware that congregations are situated differently and have varying financial resources available.
73 Our policy positions reflect our goals and aspirations, even when not immediately attainable for
74 all. But we should attempt to provide benefits for our own employees that we endorse for
75 workers everywhere, and establish policies that respect their personal and family needs as well as
76 their contributions to our institutions and communities.

77
78 This ethical mandate extends to our use of contract labor. Congregations may engage contractors
79 for catering, maintenance, construction or numerous other tasks that are not performed by paid
80 employees of the synagogue. Normative labor practices vary from community to community and
81 from one profession to another, making it difficult to establish a single standard that would apply
82 to all circumstances. In some communities, the use of immigrant labor and/or day labor may be a
83 routine and generally accepted practice. These same circumstances, however, can lead to
84 intimidation and abusive practices imposed on vulnerable laborers without access to legal
85 protections. Congregations should make a good faith effort to do business only with companies
86 that maintain fair and ethical labor practices that are in line with our existing policies.

87
88 The National Association of Temple Administrators (NATA), the Commission on Social Action
89 (CSA), the Religious Action Center (RAC) of Reform Judaism, and the Union's Department on
90 Synagogue Management all provide valuable tools to help congregations meet this commitment.
91 Working cooperatively, the Union, its affiliates and its member congregations can provide a

92 framework of Jewish values to guide our employment practices and build communities where
93 God's presence is felt in all of our interactions.

94
95 **THEREFORE**, the Union for Reform Judaism resolves to urge congregations and all arms of
96 the Reform Movement to:

- 97
98 1. Create a workplace environment that promotes a culture of support and respect for all
99 employees;
- 100 2. Systematically review and assess on an ongoing basis their existing employment
101 procedures and practices and, when necessary, develop plans to bring their employment
102 policies in line with existing Union recommendations for fair and equitable treatment for
103 all employees;
- 104 3. To the greatest extent feasible:
- 105 a. Provide benefits for full-time employees such as health insurance and retirement
106 support; and
- 107 b. When outsourcing, seek out businesses that pay a living wage, provide benefits
108 for their full-time workers and engage in fair and ethical employment practices.

109
110 **THE UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM FURTHER RESOLVES TO** urge the Commission
111 on Social Action of Reform Judaism and the Commission on Synagogue Management,
112 working in coordination with the National Association of Temple Administrators (NATA), to
113 prepare resources to assist congregations, affiliates and other arms of the Movement to assess
114 their current employment practices in light of these values.

115

1 **PROPOSED RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL’S 60th ANNIVERSARY**

2
3 Submitted by the Association of Reform Zionists of America
4 to the 69th Union for Reform Judaism General Assembly

5
6 **BACKGROUND**

7
8 We celebrate the miracle of Israel’s birth and existence, applauding her accomplishments and
9 understanding the dangers of powerlessness., The historical reality calls upon us as religious
10 Jews and Reform Zionists to engage in acts of sanctity and to embed this holy day, Israel’s 60th
11 anniversary, in our sacred calendar.

12
13 The Israeli Declaration of Independence calls for both a State for the Jews and a Jewish State,
14 and there remains much work to be done to create a fully democratic, pluralistic and just society.
15 As Progressive Jews, we have a great deal to offer regarding the evolving priorities of the State
16 of Israel.

17
18 The occasion of Israel’s 60th anniversary, ARZA’s 30th anniversary, and NFTY in Israel’s 50th
19 anniversary provides our Movement with an opportunity for significant conversation and
20 discussion about the tenor, tone and content of our relationship with the State of Israel. The
21 recent growth and vitality of our partners in the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism
22 provide us with a unique opportunity for partnership.

23
24 **THEREFORE**, the Union for Reform Judaism resolves to:

- 25
26 1. Urge our congregations in North America and beyond to join in Movement-wide
27 programming around Israel at 60, ARZA at 30 and NFTY in Israel at 50 to facilitate
28 significant conversations about the relationships between Reform Jews and Israel and the
29 meaning and reality of our mutual obligation and destiny; and
30 2. Call upon our congregations to dedicate the weekend of May 9–11, 2008 to a program of
31 Israel engagement that helps us all rejoice, reflect and renew our commitment to Israel.

1 **PROPOSED RESOLUTION PROMOTING ACCEPTANCE OF PROGRESSIVE**
2 **JUDAISM IN ISRAEL AND OPPOSING THE FRIEDMANN/AMAR AGREEMENT**

3
4 Submitted by the Association of Reform Zionists of America
5 to the 69th Union for Reform Judaism General Assembly
6

7 **BACKGROUND**
8

9 For the nearly sixty years of Israel’s existence, Orthodox Judaism, as expressed via the Chief
10 Rabbinat and Ministry of Religious Affairs, has exercised de facto hegemony over all Jews of
11 Israel with regard to vital matters of personal status (conversion, marriage, divorce and burial),
12 regardless of individuals’ personal convictions or choice. Following unsuccessful efforts in
13 previous decades, once again an initiative is pending in the Knesset to expand and make *de jure*
14 these powers. While these efforts are directed at Jewish life in Israel, their potential effects will
15 be seen and felt by non-Orthodox Jews worldwide. As North America is home to the largest
16 Jewish community outside Israel, and as the Reform Movement represents the largest Jewish
17 stream in this hemisphere, we ask that our voice and concerns on this issue be heard. The Reform
18 Movement has adopted resolutions on related issues in the past, including: The Jewishness of the
19 Jewish State (1987), Religious Pluralism in Israel (1993), Operation Equality (1995), Religious
20 Freedom in Israel (1997), Reform Pilgrimage to Israel (1997), and Reaffirming Religious
21 Pluralism in Israel (1997).
22

23 The proposed Knesset legislation recently agreed on by Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann and
24 Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar will allow tightly proscribed civil marriage relief for Israeli citizens
25 not recognized as Jews (or Christians or Muslims). Primarily, those citizens are arrivals from the
26 former Soviet Union who are family members of Jews who immigrated under the Law of Return
27 and who otherwise live as secular Israelis participating fully in civic life, speaking Hebrew,
28 paying taxes, and often serving in the Israel Defense Forces. While ostensibly a humanitarian
29 response, the proposal risks permanently alienating the affected individuals and their descendants
30 from the Jewish people. Moreover, the proposed legislation would institutionalize a database
31 (blacklist) of citizens the rabbinat deems barred from marrying under Jewish law (*agunot*,
32 *mamzerim* and the children thereof), and for the first time, would provide the Chief Rabbinat
33 with official Knesset recognition as having exclusive authority in matters of personal status.
34

35 Acknowledging that Jews outside Israel cannot demand change in Israeli law, we must
36 nonetheless make clear our grave concern for the consequences of the proposed Friedmann-
37 Amar legislation. The division and delegitimization the proposed legislation portends will drive
38 Jews from one another in anger and humiliation and away from the Jewish state. Should the
39 proposed legislation become law, Orthodox premarital inquisitions and particularly the
40 maintenance of multigenerational blacklists will be recognized as affronts to human dignity and
41 respect and to the unity of the Jewish people.
42

43 **THEREFORE**, while continuing to build and uphold the strongest possible affinity between
44 Jews of all streams and the State and people of Israel, and while treasuring Israel as the Jewish

45 homeland, with citizenship under the Law of Return forever attainable by Jews of all streams, the
46 Union for Reform Judaism resolves to:

- 47 1. Call on members of the Knesset and the Israeli public to disassociate themselves from the
48 Friedmann-Amar agreement, and to defeat it and any similar proposals if introduced.
- 49 2. Call on members of the Knesset and the government of Israel to grant all citizens full and
50 unqualified rights of choice in matters of personal status and conscience;
- 51 3. Call on members of the Knesset and the government of Israel to recognize the legitimacy
52 and parity of Progressive Jewish movements in Israel, in parallel with Jewish life and co-
53 existence abroad;
- 54 4. Call on members of the Knesset and the Government of Israel to remove all legal barriers
55 to non-Orthodox officiating of marriage and to establish civil marriage for those who are
56 unable or unwilling to participate in a Jewish marriage of any description;
- 57 5. Call on members of the Knesset and the Government of Israel to denounce and forbid the
58 existence of officially sanctioned religious blacklists.

- 47 • There is a growing interest in and commitment to adult Jewish studies offering
48 exploration of the breadth and depth of Judaic knowledge.
49 • There is a growing need for teachers with the knowledge and skills required to respond to
50 the increasing interests in adult Jewish learning and the wide range of experience of the
51 learners.

52
53 Recent studies, such as the Feld Study¹², designed by the Commission on Lifelong Jewish
54 Learning to research the state of congregations' educational programs and systems, have
55 identified a significant change in the composition of membership units of our congregations,
56 with a growing number of households consisting of one partner raised Jewishly and one raised in
57 another faith. Through our outreach efforts we have welcomed non-Jewish partners into our
58 communities and, as they move beyond introduction to Judaism programs, they and their
59 partners seek more advanced Jewish learning opportunities. Adult learning programs are vitally
60 important not just in light of these demographic shifts, but are necessary to enable our
61 congregations to continue to build vibrant Jewish communities.

62
63 In addition to adult education for our members, the building of lifelong learning communities
64 will be greatly enhanced if we encourage and create opportunities for volunteer leaders and
65 professionals to develop and improve their skills, raise the level of their Jewish learning and
66 Hebrew literacy, and improve their expertise in teaching and disseminating the wisdom of our
67 faith. Congregational leaders and professionals committed to continuing education will benefit
68 themselves and their congregations significantly by bringing new ideas and new energy to their
69 congregations and by creating Jewishly literate and sacred communities.

70
71 In nearly every profession today, continuing education is expected, if not required, in order for
72 those in the profession to provide continued expertise in their work. We should expect no less
73 from those who commit themselves to careers in Jewish life. Many of the professional
74 associations within the Movement provide certification programs and opportunities for
75 continuing education for their members. Professionals should be encouraged to take advantage of
76 such opportunities and acknowledged when they do. Affiliates that do not have such programs
77 for their professionals should develop and/or expand continuing education opportunities.

78
79 Adult learning should become a Movement-wide priority, enabling our professionals, volunteer
80 leaders, and members at large to synthesize Jewish continuing education with everyday living.
81 By doing so we will significantly deepen the meaning of our lives as Jews and will become even
82 more passionate and committed to assuring that our work serves to create vibrant and life-
83 sustaining congregations and communities. We believe in *torah lishmah*—that Jewish learning
84 has value for its own sake—and that participation in Jewish learning will enrich spirituality
85 (*k'dushah*), build community (*k'hilah*), encourage repairing the world (*tikkun olam*) and sustain
86 Jewish continuity (*brit olam*).

87
88 **THEREFORE**, the Union for Reform Judaism resolves to:

- 89
90 1. Create new and expanded opportunities for its leaders throughout the Movement to
91 engage in Torah study, Jewish learning and programs for their personal growth and

¹²Feld Study, Commission on Lifelong Jewish Learning, spring 2007.

- 92 development as leaders of a sacred Reform Jewish community, and encourage them
93 to embrace such opportunities and model lifelong Jewish learning;
- 94 2. Help members of its staff to expand their Jewish learning by:
- 95 a. Encouraging and supporting their efforts to achieve the highest level of
96 certification offered by their professional organizations;
- 97 b. Providing opportunities for continuation of Judaic and professional studies;
- 98 c. Encouraging and providing time for staff members to take advantage of
99 professional development opportunities, distance learning and similar endeavors;
- 100 3. Encourage and assist congregations, affiliates and all arms of the Movement to create
101 and/or expand:
- 102 a. Opportunities for members of their staffs to increase their Jewish learning by:
- 103 i. Encouraging and supporting their efforts to achieve the highest level of
104 certification offered by their professional organizations;
- 105 ii. Providing opportunities for continuation of Judaic and professional studies;
- 106 iii. Encouraging and providing time for staff members to take advantage of
107 professional development opportunities, distance learning and similar
108 endeavors;
- 109 b. Opportunities for volunteer leaders and members to fulfill an ongoing
110 commitment to Jewish learning;
- 111 c. Recognition of completion of significant steps along the pathway of lifelong
112 Jewish learning and continuing professional education by volunteer leaders and
113 staff; and
- 114 4. Work with and encourage the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion,
115 Central Conference of American Rabbis, American Conference of Cantors, National
116 Association of Temple Administrators, National Association of Temple Educators,
117 Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism, Program Directors of Reform
118 Judaism, Professional Association of Reform Day Schools, and other professional
119 affiliates to continue and expand their efforts to provide significant opportunities and
120 standards for a lifelong commitment to professional education and development
121 programs.
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Treatment for TBI comes in many forms. One way to help TBI survivors rehabilitate is through a community-based model that encourages the use of the community as a source of support and nurturing. Acceptance by peers, employers, and community members is essential to the healing process, especially since the disabilities resulting from TBI are not always apparent.¹⁹

Community support for individuals living with TBI allows us to fulfill the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*, visiting the sick. This is particularly important for veterans who, returning home from a traumatic experience, require high quality medical care and support to cope with their emotions and injuries. In addition to visiting soldiers, we are obligated to make sure they are welcomed back home to a society that will provide the care and resources they need.

THEREFORE, the Union for Reform Judaism resolves to:

1. Urge the United States and Canadian governments and state and provincial governments to support and expand programs that:
 - a. Teach healthcare providers to screen for and treat TBI;
 - b. Ensure that TBI survivors have access to appropriate healthcare including rehabilitative services;
 - c. Provide research money for TBI studies through the National Institutes of Health, the Center for Disease Control, and other appropriate agencies; and
 - d. Expand efforts to educate the public about TBI.
2. Call on state, provincial and local governments to strengthen and enforce safety legislation, such as mandatory helmet and seatbelt laws that can reduce TBIs;
3. Raise awareness of Traumatic Brain Injury in our congregations through educational programs on TBI, its prevention and treatment; and
4. Encourage our congregations to welcome and reach out to those with TBI, particularly military personnel coming home from war, and to develop resources to assist in meeting their unique needs.

¹⁹ Sander, Angelle MD and Strutchen, Margaret MD. Making Connections After Brain Injury: A guide for Social Peer Mentors. Baylor College of Medicine. December 2006.

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2. Work with HUC-JIR to ensure that rabbinical and cantorial students receive appropriate and up-to-date training on Jewish genetic diseases.
 3. Urge members of the CCAR and ACC to include the latest information on Jewish genetic diseases in their premarital counseling sessions, and to encourage couples to undergo carrier testing.
 4. Encourage all members of our congregations who are of Eastern/Central European descent and are between the ages of 18 and 45 to consider screening for Jewish genetic disease carrier status.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM

ARTICLE XIII MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 11. All resolutions to be acted upon by the General Assembly shall be presented as follows:

- a. Resolutions may be initiated by presentation to the Resolutions Committee (care of the administrative secretary) by a constituent congregation, a council or federation, the Board of Trustees, a national affiliate, or a commission not less than ninety (90) days prior to the date appointed for the convening of the General Assembly. All such resolutions shall be considered by the Resolutions Committee, which shall have the power to endorse them, recommend rejection of them, or suggest revisions thereof. All resolutions so submitted, in original form or as changed with the consent of the proposers, shall be reported to the constituent congregations of the Union not less than sixty (60) days prior to the date appointed for the convening of the General Assembly, together with the recommendations of the Resolutions Committee, including any suggested changes or substitutes and reasons therefor. Proposed amendments to such reported resolutions may be submitted to the Resolutions Committee at least ten (10) days prior to the date appointed for the convening of the General Assembly.

The Resolutions Committee shall meet in the city in which the General Assembly is being held at least forty-eight hours prior to the opening of the first scheduled plenary session to consider such resolutions and any suggested amendments thereto, at which time proposers of the resolutions or amendments shall have an opportunity to be heard.

- b. Resolutions may be submitted to the Resolutions Committee through the administrative secretary by petition of the majority of the registered delegates of each of at least five constituent congregations not later than the end of the plenary session of the second day of the General Assembly.
- c. Additional resolutions may be presented to the General Assembly at any time during the meeting of the General Assembly by the Resolutions Committee and by other committees of the General Assembly appointed by the chairman of the Board of Trustees or by the presiding officer.

SECTION 12. All resolutions referred or submitted to the Resolutions Committee of the General Assembly as provided in subsections (a) or (b) of Section 11 of this article shall be considered by said committee, and such resolutions as it shall approve, either as originally proposed or as modified, shall be recommended by it to the General Assembly for consideration and passage. The Resolutions Committee shall also report any resolutions rejected by it or on which it failed to act, and these resolutions may not be considered by the General Assembly except upon the affirmative vote of the majority of delegates present and voting without debate.

SECTION 13. The adoption of resolutions recommended to the General Assembly by the Resolutions Committee pursuant to subsection (a) of Section 11 of this article shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting. Amendments to such resolutions that were previously submitted to the Resolutions Committee prior to the ten-day period described in subsection (a) of Section 11 of this article, if properly submitted to the General Assembly for consideration, shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting. Amendments to such resolutions that were not previously submitted to the Resolutions Committee prior to such ten-day period shall be considered by the General Assembly only upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting without debate. The adoption of resolutions presented to the General Assembly pursuant to subsections (b) or (c) of Section 11 of this article shall require the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the delegates present and voting.

SECTION 14. Except as otherwise provided herein, meetings of the General Assembly shall be conducted in accordance with parliamentary usage as set forth in the latest revised edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

2007 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

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