



BUILDING A
BRIDGE TO OUR
SECOND CENTURY

Beth Israel Congregation

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From the Beth Israel Congregation Board of Directors;

Beth Israel Congregation includes and welcomes members with a range of political viewpoints. Partly for that reason, its board of directors rarely takes a public stand on issues with political implications. However, where issues clearly cross profound ethical lines, we have a moral obligation to take a stand. This is one such case.

In addition to supporting the statement below, Beth Israel is proud of our clothing closet for immigrants, opened as part of our ongoing relationship with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County and its myriad elements of immigrant resettlement. As active members of the local interfaith community, this statement reaffirms our Jewish ideals.

NEW YORK - The Conservative/Masorti movement of Judaism as represented by its constituent organizations listed below has issued the following statement regarding the executive order President Donald Trump signed on Friday barring many refugees and immigrants from entering the United States:

Deeply rooted in our tradition, faith, and values, we are a people of immigrants. Throughout our history we often were the stranger in a strange land and were persecuted and attacked simply for being the other. As Jews, it is not only our religious values that speak to welcoming those who seek shelter and safety, but it is also a pillar of free, democratic nations.

Our religious tradition repeatedly forbids us from oppressing the stranger. For instance, Leviticus 19:34 commands us, 'The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.' And Exodus 22:21, 'And you shall not wrong a stranger, neither shall you oppress them; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.' It is a betrayal of Jewish history and our own Jewish values to stand quiet as victims of war and terror are left helpless -- especially on the basis of religion.

The protracted war in Syria has created 7 million displaced persons within Syria alone and millions more throughout the Middle East, with refugees escaping through Turkey, the Balkans and Europe. Meanwhile, millions of undocumented immigrants in America live in fear of imprisonment, deportation or worse.

The Conservative movement has continuously and consistently advocated for the rights of immigrants including pathways to citizenship and family reunification as a top priority. We call on the US government to reject policy proposals that would halt, limit, or curtail refugee resettlement in the U.S. or prioritize certain refugees over others; and urge President Trump and the U.S. Congress to instead take bold leadership by providing robust funding to support refugees around the world as well as provide necessary resources to refugees who are already resettled in the U.S.

Most importantly, the Conservative Movement completely rejects the targeting of individuals based on their religion. As Jews, it is an affront to our fundamental values. We are all enriched by the diverse set of experiences that immigrants bring to our society. We see it not only throughout our economy and educational system, but also in our synagogues, camps, schools, and institutions where people of diverse backgrounds, countries of origin and experiences come together to pray to the same God, who sees us all as equals. To do otherwise betrays the Jewish values we find deeply engrained in our faith and history.

Rabbinical Assembly
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
The Jewish Theological Seminary
Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies
Cantors Assembly
Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs
Mercaz USA
Women's League for Conservative Judaism