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Groups --
Agudath Israel

ב"ה



**AGUDATH ISRAEL
OF AMERICA** הסתדרות
אגודת ישראל
באמריקה

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FIVE BEEKMAN STREET
PHONE: (212) 791-1800

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10038
CABLE: AGUDOHNEWYORK

October 14, 1982

Mr. William Barr
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Bill:

It was truly a pleasure meeting you the other day at the White House. I was delighted that Frank Monahan finally brought us together and that we were able to chat about a broad range of issues of mutual concern.

I was particularly delighted that you agreed with my suggestion that a White House meeting should be convened right after the elections to plan strategy for the lame duck session of Congress. I think that some time during the morning of November 4th would be an ideal time to get together. In the interim, we are suggesting to our people in the field that they maintain the pressure on their legislators.

I was delighted to meet with some of your colleagues, even if it was on one foot, to briefly discuss some of our concerns. I am taking the liberty of enclosing a copy of our legislative agenda for the 97th Congress (which is admittedly outdated and will be revised shortly for the 98th Congress) in the hope that it will give you some idea of our positions on various issues. I am also sending you a brochure about Agudath Israel which should be helpful to you.

I look forward to working with you in the future.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Director of Government and
Public Affairs

ML:dl
Enc.



**Coalition
Advocacy
Service**

A Guide and Directory

AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA



Agudath Israel of America was founded in 1922 to perpetuate authentic Judaism and to come to grips with all current issues in accordance with Torah tradition. For this purpose it has established a broad range of constructive projects, organized

Coalition



Members of the Moetzes Gedole Hatorah
(Council of Torah Sages of Agudath Israel of America)



in its national headquarters in New York City into nineteen divisions with a large executive staff. Its scope covers every area of life directly affecting young and old in many parts of the Americas, Israel and Russia.

It is affiliated with the world Agudath Israel movement which maintains chapters in major Jewish communities globally. The organization's leaders include the nation's most respected rabbinic scholars who lead a coalition of Orthodox Jews from every walk of life.

In 1912, in Katowitz, Poland, leading scholars of the European continent gathered to proclaim the birth of a new movement: Agudath Israel (Unity of Israel). Its purpose was to unite the multitudes of Jews living by the tenets of its pronounced goal: "To solve all problems facing Jews as individuals and as a people in the spirit of the Torah." The international Agudath Israel movement has been a major factor in saving authentic Judaism from erosion by assimilationist forces, and has a long record of marshalling Jews for effective constructive action in times of war and peace.

In 1922, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a group of young men heard the vibrations made in Europe by the new movement, which had succeeded in rallying to its ranks over a million members and supporters. Their first activity was to provide intensive Jewish education programs for its members on a daily basis. Thus were planted the seeds for the broadest coalition of Orthodox Jews in the history of the United States: Agudath Israel of America.



Advocacy



With the growth of Orthodox Jewry and its constituency in America, Agudath Israel has emerged as the prime advocate for the religious rights of Jews. In this role, the organization projects its views and positions on issues on the agenda of the Jewish people and society at large through many-faceted programs.

The organization's **Commission on Legislation and Civic Action**, through a network of volunteers, maintains a constant vigil to protect the rights of the Orthodox Jew and to represent the interests of Yeshivos (Jewish all-day schools) before governmental and legislative bodies. This activity, which Agudath Israel has pioneered, has proven to be of major assistance to the financially hard-pressed Torah institutions.

The Legislative Commission's activities have affected the Orthodox Jew in every phase of his

life. To list a sampling: humane slaughter of meat—to protect "shechita"; Daylight Savings Time—to insure morning prayer at its prescribed time; consumerism—to guarantee that what is sold as kosher is not misrepresented, be it food or

In Defense of Religious Rights

religious articles such as "mezuzos" and "tefillin;" discrimination—to protect the rights of the Sabbath observer in the public and private employ; status—to obtain the proper recognition for Jewish higher education; the Jewish patient—to make certain that hospitals respect the unique religious needs of the Jew; reverse discrimination—to defend those who unjustly suffer from so-called affirmative action programs.

Agudath Israel has also fought vigorously to alter the priorities in allocating the Jewish charity dollar. The goal: assigning the major portion to genuine Jewish education so as to prevent the American Jewish scene from being transformed into a vast spiritual cemetery with only pockets of living Judaism.

Religious and Welfare Aid to Israel

Agudath Israel of America, through its sister organization in Israel, works to maintain the authentic religious soul of the Holy Land, at the same time that the organization helps on issues involving the physical security of Israel.

Agudath Israel's efforts for Israel, in addition to its advocacy role, includes assistance to a broad range of services provided by its sister organization in the Holy Land. They embrace the entire gamut of concerns for the spiritual and physical welfare of the Jews in the Holy Land, including Torah education for children and adults, trade schools, children's institutions, aid for the needy and immigrant services.



Services



From its inception, Agudath Israel has served as a training ground for thousands of Jewish youth around the country for responsible leadership roles in their communities. Today, through a National Commission on Youth, more than 25,000 youths led by 1,700 volunteer leaders benefit from activities tailored for every age group. Separate divisions (Pirchei Agudath Israel—boys, Bnos Agudath Israel—girls, Zeirei Agudath Israel—adolescent boys) meet the special needs of youngsters from early childhood in 200 local chapters that assemble weekly from the East to the West Coast to partake of programs which prepare them for a life dedicated to loyal Jewish service and responsible voluntarism.

Agudath Israel has given more than 25,000 youngsters a beneficial vacation experience in its two summer camps in New York's Catskill Mountains: Camp Agudah (for boys) and Camp Bnos (for girls). These camps accommodate a large

number of youngsters from poor homes: the materially impoverished as well as the spiritually deprived.

"Reach-out" is an empty cliché for many Jewish youngsters around the country who, because the

Working With Jewish Youth

are ignorant of their Jewish heritage, are prone to becoming an assimilation statistic. The Jewish Education Program (JEP) launched in 1972 by Agudath Israel, has changed the lives of many such youngsters. Release-hour in public schools, visitation programs, activities in day schools and Talmud Torahs, are only some of the program's components. This JEP project now also has an office in Toronto, and affiliated chapters in ten cities guided from the New York national headquarters.

Publishing Jewish Literature for Youth and Adults



Agudath Israel's Publication Department publishes widely acclaimed monthlies in Yiddish and English. "Dos Yiddishe Vort," published consecutively since 1953, features penetrating articles of

comment and inspiring biographical and historical essays. "The Jewish Observer," launched in 1936, is a provocative English language monthly journal of thought and opinion.

Various divisions of Agudath Israel of America, especially the youth groups, produce numerous publications of their own, thus providing for all members of the family. The Orthodox Library consists of Yiddish language anthologies of essays by leading Orthodox Jewish thinkers grouped by Festival themes. Social service projects issue newsletters on their activities, and many periodically release research papers. Agudath Israel's public information department disseminates bulletins on the Torah position on contemporary issues. The Agudah News Reporter is the organization's monthly house organ.

Under a grant from HEW's Ethnic Heritage Studies Program, Agudath Israel of America produced "Judaiscope," which when completed will be a library of ten books dealing with the Torah approach to a broad range of current social and ethical concerns. The first two books were published in the early 1981: "The Torah Personality" and "Seasons of the Soul."



In addition to the written word, cassette recordings of major addresses and discourses by distinguished Torah scholars taped at annual conventions of Agudath Israel, have been made available by the Agudath Israel Audio-Visual Library. Coordinated slide and cassette programs dealing with historical themes are also available as are the ever popular Pirchei and JEP musical recordings.

Adult Jewish Education Programs

In 1923, the revered Rabbi Meir Shapiro introduced at the Second World Congress of Agudath Israel in Vienna a revolutionary system of adult Torah study: the "Daf Yomi." By studying the same folio of the Talmud each day, Jews around the world would be united in spirit through a Torah study program. Since 1924, Agudath Israel of America is a key factor in organizing such "Daf Yomi" groups throughout the nation, which today comprise many thousands of adult students. Its "Daf Yomi" Commission publishes unique pocket-sized volumes of the Talmud as an aid for participants in the world's largest united adult Torah study program.

In recent years, in an effort to facilitate the delivery of Torah study to the Jewish masses, Agudath



Israel established Torah Education Network (Reshet Shiurei Torah) to enable men and women to study Torah in their home milieu. Volunteers teach every level of Jewish knowledge, from Alef Bais to intensive advanced Talmud study. Telephone hook-ups, tapes and correspondence create personal "buddy systems" for those for whom travel is not feasible.

Stabilizing Ethnic Neighborhoods



Agudath Israel seeks to preserve neighborhood stability. The Southern Brooklyn Community Organization (SBCO), partially funded by the Ford Foundation, is an innovative effort to preserve ethnic neighborhoods through effective local organization and development. Improved housing, block associations, crime prevention, are only several of the goals of this new effort. This project has historic value to a people which has witnessed flourishing neighborhoods deteriorate and decay.

SBCO has been highly successful in the Boro Park community particularly, and has gained a national reputation as a model program of saving neighborhoods from erosion through interethnic cooperation.

Helping Senior Citizens

A Commission on Senior Citizens serves thousands of elderly with a unique Torah flavor through three citizens centers. Several hundred elderly benefit daily from the kosher lunch program, for many their only nutritiously-balanced meal of the day.

Information and referral programs, special homebound programs with a big assist from volunteers from the Agudath Israel youth division, a "meals on wheels" program, visitation services, household chores, cultural programs, legal advice, medical programs, and special events for Jewish and civic holidays are some of the programs of this Commission for the aged.



Opening New Vistas for the Unemployed and Underemployed

In early 1975, Agudath Israel responded to a mounting need within the community by launching its Project COPE (Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment) to train the unemployed and underemployed for meaningful livelihoods. Since its inception, the federally-funded project helped thousands of applicants who visited its offices throughout the city of New York.



The range of its services is extensive: on-job-training, vocational education, classroom training, placement, career guidance, counseling, testing, immigrants' desk, job club and publications. Project COPE has earned a reputation as one of the most effective job training agencies in the country.

COPE Vocational Institute, licensed by the New York State Education Department, operates two divisions which offer training in areas as diverse as secretarial services, computer programming and kosher catering.

One of the most highly regarded agencies of Project COPE is the Fresh Start Training Program for displaced homemakers. This agency has extended a helping hand to women who suddenly lost their husband either through death or divorce, and enables them to cope with life's new responsibilities.

Overseas and Domestic Refugee Relief and Resettlement

In the U.S.A., through Project RISE (Russian Immigrant Services and Education), Agudath Israel is helping the large influx of Russian immigrants in America cope with life in the new country. While Project COPE has assisted hundreds in gaining employment, a special Russian Desk delivers help in other ways, publicized through a regular monthly bulletin in the Russian language. Also involved in this effort is JEP, the reach-out arm of Agudath Israel, which sponsors a unique after-school program for Russian immigrant children in the Brighton Beach/Coney Island area of Brooklyn.

Project RISE maintains a large variety of programs to restore the Jewish roots of these refugees from communist Russia. Included are the provision of all religious articles, circumcisions, summer camps, educational experiences, personal counseling, and a unique "adopt-a-family" program which brings together religious American families with new arrivals on a one-to-one basis.

Overseas, through its Project YAD, thousands of parcels are sent year-round to Jews in eastern Europe. Also, packages with special kosher Pass-over food are shipped before the holiday to Soviet Russia. Through the Russian Immigrant Rescue Fund, Agudath Israel supports projects and facilities for the religious absorption of the Soviet Jews.



in Israel. Agudath Israel youth groups join this effort with its Torah Action Program (TAP) which involves youngsters to help Russian Jews in need.

The rescue arm of Agudath Israel reaches out throughout the world, wherever Jews live in lands of peril. Most recently, large numbers of Iranian Jews, youth and adults have been resettled in safe havens, and given a new lease on life, as a result of these efforts which are conducted with great discretion.

Orthodox Jewish Archives

In early 1978, Agudath Israel established the Orthodox Jewish Archives, originally to document a history of the world movement. These Archives have been gradually expanded to include material about Orthodox Jews nationally and internationally.

Agudath Israel's Archives have a major section on the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust years. It has received important collections of papers on the rescue work of Orthodox Jews and agencies.



Agudath Israel absorbing refugees after World War II

Courtesy, Orthodox Jewish Archives

Israel and South America

The most recent region of the world which Agudath Israel seeks to enlighten with Torah is South America. As a result of its initiative, Torah institutions have developed and grown in Argentina and will hopefully spread to other Latin American countries. The Commission on Latin American

Jewry is currently helping to build in Buenos Aires a large Torah center and dormitory for students of high school and graduate (Kolel) levels to train Torah scholars and community leaders to save this long neglected area from spiritual extinction.

Agudath Israel's efforts for Israel, in addition to its advocacy role, includes assistance to a broad range of services, formed by its sister organization in the Holy Land. They embrace every range of concern for the spiritual and physical welfare of the Jews in the Holy Land including Torah education for children and adults, trade schools, children's institutions, aid for the needy and immigrant services.



The Individual

In addition to these public programs, Agudath Israel activists are involved in discreetly helping large numbers of individual people cope with their personal problems in various ways. The absence of fanfare about these activities is the trademark of an organization which truly seeks to help the individual, at the same time that it works for the collective good. As a movement deeply conscious of its historic mission for the entire Jewish people (Klal Yisroel) and all mankind, Agudath Israel's hallmark is simultaneously never to forget its responsibility to the individual.

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(212) 791-1800

AGUDATH ISRAEL WORLD ORGANIZATION

Room 925 — 9 Beekman Street, N.Y.C.
(212) 791-1835

Chizuk — The Torah Link

(212) 791-1848

***AGUDIST BENEVOLENT SOCIETY**

(212) 436-1458

***ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT**

(212) 791-1842

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER

803-5 Kings Highway
Brooklyn, New York 11223
(212) 627-3500

***CHEVRAH OSEH CHESED**

(212) 791-1800

***COMMISSION ON ADULT TORAH EDUCATION:**

Daf Yomi (212) 791-1827
Speakers and Lecturers Bureau (212) 791-1800
Torah Education Nework (ReShet) (212) 791-1828

***COMMISSION ON BRANCH SERVICE
AND DEVELOPMENT**

(212) 791-1800

***COMMISSION ON ISRAEL**

(212) 791-1800

***COMMISSION ON LATIN AMERICAN JEWRY**

(212) 791-1800

***COMMISSION ON LEGISLATION AND CIVIC ACTION**

(212) 791-1829

***COMMISSION ON SENIOR CITIZENS:**

Boro Park

4511 14th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11219
(212) 854-7430

Flatbush (Brookdale)

1817 Avenue H
Brooklyn, New York 11230
(212) 434-8670

Upper Manhattan (Moriah)

90 Bennett Avenue
New York, New York 10033
(212) 923-5715

*are in main office at:
Suite 910
5 Beekman Street
New York, New York 10038

***IMMIGRANT DIVISION**

(212) 791-1800

JEWISH EDUCATION PROGRAM (JEP):

*National Office (212) 791-1800
Tri-State Field Office (212) 941-2600
Toronto Office (416) 781-1081

**NATIONAL COMMISSION
ON JEWISH ETHNIC AFFAIRS**

***Judaiscope**

Information (212) 791-1800

**SOUTHERN BROOKLYN
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

4520 18th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11204
(212) 435-1300

***NATIONAL COMMISSION ON YOUTH:**

Pirchei Agudath Israel (212) 791-1837
Bachurei Agudath Israel (212) 791-1800
Zeirei Agudath Israel (212) 791-1820
Bros Agudath Israel (212) 791-1818

NAJR (Needy Aid for Jewish Residents)

4511 14th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11219
(212) 436-5378

N'SHEI AGUDATH ISRAEL

Suite 928 — 5 Beekman Street, N.Y.C.
(212) 791-1840

***OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIR**

(212) 791-1844

PROJECT COPE

(Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment)

Main Office:

5 Beekman Street
New York, New York 10038
Administrative Offices (212) 587-9250
Client Service Center (212) 587-9200

Brooklyn:

5218 16th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11219
(212) 851-0333

803-5 Kings Highway
Brooklyn, New York 11223
(212) 627-3500

Fresh Start Training Program (Displaced Homemakers)

803-5 Kings Highway
Brooklyn, New York 11223
(212) 627-3500

*are in main office at:
Suite 910
5 Beekman Street
New York, New York 10038

COPE Vocational Institute:

Business Skills Division

Suite 513
5 Beekman Street
New York, New York 10038
(212) 587-9257

Computer Center

Suite 700
(212) 587-9259

Administrative Offices

Suite 610
(212) 587-9272

PROJECT OHR (Office of Home Care Referral)

3920 13th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11218
(212) 853-2700

***PROJECT RISE
(Russian Immigrant Services and Education)**

(212) 791-1830

***PUBLICATIONS (212) 791-1810**

The Jewish Observer (212) 791-1814
Dos Yiddishe Vort (212) 791-1812
Audio Visual Department (212) 791-1800
Orthodox Library (212) 791-1800
Press Relations Department (212) 791-1800

***RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT RESCUE FUND**

(212) 791-1816

***SUMMER CAMPS DIVISION:**

Camp Agudah

(914) 292-8830 (in summer)
Ferdale, New York 12734
*(212) 791-1823 (rest of year)

Camp Bnos

(914) 292-9415 (in summer)
Liberty, New York 12754
*(212) 791-1823 (rest of year)

Camp Agudah of Toronto

(705) 765-5587 (in summer)
129 McGillivray
Toronto, Ontario CANADA
(416) 789-5514 (rest of year)

***SHMUEL WALD MEMORIAL FUND**


(212) 791-1800

***YAD PROJECT FOR JEWS IN RUSSIA**

(212) 791-1800

*are in main office at:
Suite 910
5 Beekman Street
New York, New York 10038

Agudath Israel of America serves the general public without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin.

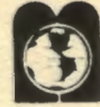


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'82

Commission on Legislation & Civic Action

a division of



אגודת ישראל
ESTABLISHED 1921

Agudath ISRAEL of AMERICA

Five Beekman Street, New York, N.Y. 10038

(212) 791-1800

The House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States are the primary legislative bodies of the United States. The members of these bodies are elected by the people of the United States and are responsible for the laws of the United States. The Agudath Israel of America is a national Jewish organization that is active in the United States and is committed to the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. The organization is active in the legislative process and is committed to the well-being of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

for the

97th Congress

Second Session

1982

1964



AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA

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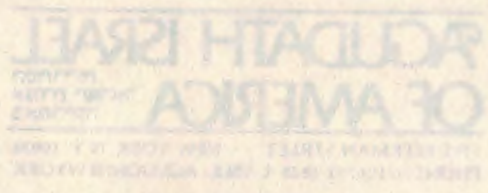
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

1964

1964

1964

1964



INTRODUCTION

The Office of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel of America and its Commission on Legislation and Civic Action have for many years taken positions on various issues before the United States Congress. The purpose of this legislative agenda is to give the members of Congress and other interested parties an opportunity to become more familiar with some of the matters that are of particular interest to the broad-based Orthodox Jewish community in the United States.

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AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA

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Position - Jewish law teaches that all human life is sacred. The life of a fetus has status and dignity under Torah dictates. The continuation or termination of pregnancy is not a matter of free choice within the province of the mother. In those cases when elimination of the fetus is warranted, such as when the mother's life is endangered, such decision must be made only upon consultation with medical and halachic authorities.

The prohibition against the taking of human life is a fundamental moral principle binding upon all mankind, regardless of denominational affiliation. Society cannot accept the right of any of its citizens to take the life of another. Fetal life is thus entitled to significant protection.

Any legislation dealing with this area will be measured against the twin goals of recognizing the dignity of fetal life and protecting the legitimate rights of free exercise of religion protected under the First Amendment.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

S. 879 and S. 49/S. 1151 - These bills would expand daylight saving time from the current six months to seven months and eight months respectively by amending the Uniform Time Act of 1966 to advance the start of daylight saving time from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in March in the case of S. 879, and to the first Sunday in March in the case of S. 49 and S. 1151.

Position - Agudath Israel opposes S. 49 and S. 1151 because a two-month extension of daylight saving time would adversely affect the daily schedules of many Orthodox Jews, particularly those who reside in areas of the United States where the sun rises relatively late in the day.

According to Jewish religious law, the earliest time that morning prayers may be recited is approximately one hour before sunrise. A sunrise chart issued by the United States Naval Observatory indicates that sunrise on March 2nd in Miami, for example, is 6:44 A.M. standard time. Morning prayers may, therefore, begin at approximately

five minutes, an Orthodox Jew would be able to leave at the conclusion of services to his place of employment by approximately 6:30 A.M.

However, if daylight saving time were to advance so as to begin on the first Sunday in March, an Orthodox Jew in Miami could not begin his prayers on March 2nd until 6:44 A.M. and, therefore, would not be in a position to leave for work until approximately 7:30 A.M. In today's society, where the average individual lives a half hour to an hour distance from his place of work, the acceleration of the start of daylight saving time could create serious difficulties for a significant percentage of Orthodox Jews who are required to be at their places of work prior to 8:00 A.M.

Although Miami was chosen as an example, the legislation would create similar hardship for many Orthodox Jews in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, New York, and other cities. The situation, of course, would slowly improve as the sun rises earlier. By the end of March, for instance, there would no longer be any appreciable effect on the schedules of Orthodox Jews.

Agudath Israel fully supports the efforts of those who wish to expand daylight saving time. We are fully cognizant of the need to reduce our country's dependency on foreign oil and to lower crime and traffic accident death rates. However, because of the serious problem described above, we can support only S. 879.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

H.R. 1779, H.R. 1904, H.R. 2289 - These bills would disband the recently established U.S. Department of Education and would authorize a different administrative structure or structures for federal education program administration.

Position - Irrespective of the proposals outlined in the bills with regard to the future of the Department of Education, Agudath Israel urges the Congress to establish as part of the legislation an Office of Non-Governmental Education to monitor the laws and regulations, both

existing and proposed, with respect to the equitable participation of nonpublic school students in federal programs.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

H.J.R. 192 - This resolution, introduced in the 1981 session of Congress, proposes an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Position - Agudath Israel is strongly opposed to an Equal Rights Amendment.

While we fully support equal opportunities for women in every phase of life, we strongly oppose E.R.A. because the potential effects of this legislation could threaten our ability to live in accordance with our traditional lifestyle and religious beliefs. We are particularly concerned about the effects of the Equal Rights Amendment on the fiber of family life which is essential to a stable and democratic society. Furthermore, attempting to achieve equality of the sexes by amending the Constitution is in our opinion unnecessary because a vast array of state and federal laws already protect women against discrimination.

In recent years the people of the United States through their state legislatures have demonstrated on a number of occasions their opposition to E.R.A. We, therefore, urge Congress to follow the dictates of the people and not initiate a new E.R.A. ratification process.

GAY RIGHTS

H.R. 1454 and H.R. 3371 - These bills would prohibit discrimination on the basis of affectional or sexual orientation.

Position - Agudath Israel is strongly opposed to these bills.

We vigorously oppose discrimination of any kind against any individual or group, whether it be based on race, creed, religion, or any other factor. However, the issue of "gay rights" generally and the purpose of this

legislation in particular is not simply to protect the civil rights of homosexuals, but is rather an attempt to legitimize that which goes against our social and moral fabric. Legislation that would establish the right of homosexuals to be placed in positions where they can easily affect impressionable young people undermines the duty of parents to protect their children from harmful influences and may readily result in ever-increasing numbers of children concluding that homosexuality is a legitimate alternate lifestyle. The proposed legislation would accord governmental sanction of the lifestyle of homosexuals and would encourage its practice in a manner which may have a detrimental effect upon school children, families, and the community in general.

QUOTAS

H.R. 3466 - This bill would prohibit governmental imposition of "quotas" which require "any individual or entity to take any action with respect to (1) the hiring or promotion policies or practices of such individual or entity, or (2) the admissions policies or practices of such individual or entity, or (3) the contracting or subcontracting policies or practices of such individual or entity."

Position - Agudath Israel strongly supports this bill.

We believe that selection, promotion, hiring, and entrance decisions should be based solely on merit, without taking into consideration irrelevant and hence discriminatory factors such as race, sex, and ethnicity.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

H.R. 254 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended requires employers to reasonably accommodate the religious practices of an employee or prospective employee, unless such accommodation would create undue hardship for the employer. This bill would provide increased protection for the religious observances and practices of employees and prospective employees by amending the law to require employers to accommodate employees' religious observances and practices unless the employer would suffer "severe

pecuniary or other material loss" because of such accommodation.

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill.

H.R. 1188 - This bill would require the Postal Service to issue regulations allowing Postal Service officers and employees "whose personal religious beliefs require the abstention from work during certain periods of time" to "engage in overtime work for time lost meeting those religious requirements."

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill which merely requires the Postal Service to comply with Title IV of the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1978 which permits similar compensatory time off for religious observance for other Federal employees.

SCHOOL PRAYER

S. 481, S. 1742, H.R. 72, H.R. 326, H.R. 2347 - These and other bills introduced in the first session of the 97th Congress would deprive the United States Supreme Court and the United States district courts of jurisdiction over any case arising out of a state statute relating to voluntary prayers in public schools and public buildings.

Position - Agudath Israel opposes these bills.

The tenor of these bills threatens to undermine the finely tuned balance of power between the three branches of government. The supremacy of the Supreme Court as the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution is a long accepted principle of American law and should not be changed by legislation. The issue here should not be viewed as school prayer but as an attempt to weaken the authority of the highest court in the United States and the lower federal courts. Although we may at times take issue with some of the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, we treasure its role in safeguarding civil rights in this country.

TIME OF DEATH

The President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research recommended last summer that the Uniform Determination of Death Act should be enacted into law in all fifty states. The Act would authorize determinations of death based upon the cessation of brain activity.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly opposes the adoption of the Uniform Determination of Death Act.

The definition of death involves ethical, legal, religious, and medical considerations and should therefore not be the subject of legislation. Moreover, according to Jewish law (and the common law) death does not occur when the brain stops functioning; it occurs only upon the total cessation of respiratory and cardiac activity. A "brain death" statute would therefore violate the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom.

In those states where time of death legislation has already been enacted into law, we support an amendment to such laws to allow for an "exemption clause" which would permit the next of kin to object to a determination of death that is contrary to the basic tenets of a patient's religion.

TRUTH-IN-TESTING

H.R. 1312 and H.R. 1662 - These bills would require all educational and occupational admissions testing services that conduct business "through any medium of interstate commerce" to provide examinees with sufficient notice of test subject matter and test results.

Position - Agudath Israel urges the Congress to incorporate in this legislation a further requirement that the number of special test administrations for Sabbath observers must equal the number of regular Saturday test administrations. This provision is necessary to protect the rights of Sabbath observers who, for religious reasons, cannot take examinations on Saturday.

1979, testing companies announced that they would cancel three out of the four special test administrations for Sabbath observers. This would have created serious difficulties for Sabbath observers who would have had only one chance per year for a make-up examination. The law was subsequently amended to require an equal number of special administrations for Sabbath observers. Testing companies have not experienced any hardship as a result of this legislation.

We urge Congress to include such a provision in a federal truth-in-testing law to extend such protection to Sabbath observers nationwide.

TUITION TAX CREDITS

S. 550 - This bill, co-sponsored by Senators Packwood and Moynihan, would amend the Internal Revenue Code to permit parents of nonpublic school students to claim a tax credit for tuition. The credit would be calculated at the rate of fifty percent of the tuition paid by the taxpayer to one or more eligible institutions for himself, his spouse, or any of his dependents. The law would provide a maximum credit of five hundred dollars per year for students of elementary and secondary schools, as well as vocational institutions and colleges.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly supports this legislation.

Parents of nonpublic school students pay rapidly rising tuition while their tax dollars support the public school system. These nonpublic schools bring diversity and richness to our educational system benefitting all our citizens and fulfill an important function in alleviating the burden on the public schools.

Tuition tax credits would help to maintain educational diversity, promote religious and intellectual liberty, and would enable parents of a wide socio-economic range to instill in their children the moral and cultural values that they believe are best for their children. The bill does not aid the nonpublic schools, but rather the students that attend them.

We urge Congress to encourage freedom of choice in education by voting for this bill.

VANDALIZING A HOUSE OF WORSHIP

S. 822, H.R. 1376 and H.R. 2085 - These bills would amend Title 18 of the U.S. Code to make it a federal crime to vandalize a consecrated cemetery, religious school, house of worship, or any other real property used for religious purposes, or any religious article contained therein.

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill.

Acts of vandalism against religious institutions have increased dramatically in the past few years. Local law enforcement agencies are unable to deal effectively with this problem. Declaring such acts federal crimes would hopefully create a forceful deterrent against would-be vandals.

VOLUNTARISM

S. 473/H.R. 1383 and H.R. 768/H.R. 476 - These bills would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide that the amount of the charitable deduction allowable for expenses incurred in the operation of a motor vehicle will be determined in the same manner government employees determine reimbursement for use of their vehicles on government business (S. 473/H.R. 1383) or at the standard mileage rate used in computing the business expense deduction (H.R. 768/H.R. 476).

Position - Agudath Israel supports these bills.

Volunteers may currently deduct nine cents per mile. Both the business expense deduction and the rate at which government employees are reimbursed are twenty cents per mile. Enactment of the legislation would result in more than doubling the amount that volunteers could deduct for use of their passenger automobiles in carrying out volunteer activities.

Although voluntarism remains strong, the rising cost of driving cars, the demands upon a volunteer's time, and

the need for additional income, prevent many from engaging in activities often only performed by volunteers. These two pieces of legislation would encourage individuals to dedicate a portion of their time to voluntary activities which enhance the quality of life in these United States.

Commission on Legislation and Civic Action of Agudath Israel of America

Agudath Israel of America, founded in 1927, is a broadly based Orthodox Jewish movement with chapters in major communities throughout the United States and Canada. It sponsors a wide range of constructive projects in the field of religion, education, children's welfare, and social action affecting the lives of young and old in the many parts of the Americas, Israel and Russia. The organization's leaders include the nation's most respected rabbinic scholars and its committees consist of a comprehensive coalition of Orthodox Jews from every walk of life.

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