



Letter to Congregation

Out of the Shadows ...

Chevre,

As a congregation, Oseh Shalom and our community members, have been active in a variety of social action and social justice issues. Among those are:

- Sponsorship of Immigrant Family
- Host for men's and women's Winter Shelter
- Involvement with Elizabeth House

Over the past several months, our Board and a group of those interested in Social Justice, have been working on developing a process for Oseh Shalom to take positions on policy, endorse social justice actions, and or allow our name to appear as a sponsor, or have Oseh Shalom banners carried by members at town halls, rallies or protests.

This Process was adopted at the recent Board Meeting in February. I would personally like to acknowledge the work done by John Riehl, in conjunction with our Social Action Task Force, in helping shape this new process based on Oseh Shalom and Reconstructionist values.

You can see a copy of this process, along with the values that will inform our social Action decisions, on the Oseh shalom website. The first issue brought forward under the new process was to support a call by a number of Jewish Organizations and congregations, including Jews United For Justice, Columbia Jewish Congregation and Adat Shalom to end Howard County's collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Many other local congregations, churches and social justice groups, including several of our sister Reconstructionist affiliates in the area, have signed on to the call for County Executive, Calvin Ball, to end the ICE contract.

Our name has been conspicuously missing.

Several congregants, as well as the Congregation Action Network, appealed to our Synagogue to join them as signers on a letter to Calvin Ball.

This request has officially been honored and approved by the Board.

As individuals, you may also wish to sign on and express support. An excerpt from the letter is below:

"...it is not only immigrant families who are anxious to see Howard County cease its collaboration with ICE. As Jews, we bear the weight of intergenerational traumas. Our trauma is rooted in the actions of Nazi Germany during the Holocaust and in the memories of family members denied entry into the United States even after fleeing Europe for their lives. Our parents and grandparents were blocked from reaching safety here, or even reached these shores and were sent back to Europe to be slaughtered. We see painful parallels with the immigrants and asylum seekers fleeing violence today who are barred entry to the US, or sent back to face death in their countries of origin. We are steadfast in the belief that the United States and Howard County must provide a safe



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and welcoming new home for those who need it. Our teachers and families taught us that "Never Again" means never again for anyone."

Information regarding the action and the specific wording of the letter may be found at:

<https://jufj.org/ball-letter/>

"If I am not for me, who is for me; and if I am (only) for myself, what am I. And if not now, when?" – Hillel, Ethics of the Fathers, 1:14

L'Shalom,

Michael Cornell

President