

**Rabbis of Northern California**  
**Statement in Support of the Right to Marry in Israel**  
**As of May 19, 2015**

We love the State of Israel. We want it to succeed in every way possible. This includes, of course, its security and economic prosperity, and it also includes its ability to live up to its own stated values.

Israel's Declaration of Independence ensures freedom of religion and conscience to all. This does and should affect many aspects of life in Israel, but the specific concern of this resolution is the right to marry.

The overwhelming majority of Israeli Jews – 80% according to a recent poll -- support freedom of choice in marriage. In this, Israelis are in accord with the rest of the world's democracies, all of which make marriage possible through the alternatives of civil or various religious options for marriage.

At the moment, in the State of Israel, the only avenue for legal marriage is religious. Civil marriage is not available to anyone, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. Furthermore, Jewish marriages are legally recognized in Israel only if the officiant is an Orthodox rabbi approved by the Chief Rabbinate and only if conducted by Orthodox interpretations of Jewish tradition.

As a result, hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens are denied the right of marriage solely for religious reasons – these include:

Approximately 350,000 Israeli citizens from the Former Soviet Union who gained citizenship under the Law of Return, but whose mother or grandmother is not halakhically Jewish;

All Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Renewal Jews-by-Choice who are eligible to obtain Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return but are, nevertheless, not recognized as Jews by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel;

Any couple in which the bride is a divorcee and the groom's name is derived from the traditional priestly caste (i.e. Cohen, Katz, Kaplan, Azoulay, etc.);

Individuals who have been declared by a Religious Court to be mamzerim (illegitimate); for example, children born to parents, one of whom was previously married and the earlier marriage was not terminated by a get (halakhic writ of divorce);

As a consequence, every year, thousands of Israeli couples who wish to have the status of being legally married, choose to leave Israel to marry civilly.

Moreover, there is a dramatic rise in couples cohabiting without marriage, whether because the Rabbinate will not marry them or because the couples are unwilling to

subject themselves to Orthodox, non-egalitarian strictures.

Finally, the failure of Israel to provide for civil marriage and to recognize Jewish marriages under the auspices of rabbis from the other streams of Judaism has alienated many Diaspora Jews from the State of Israel precisely at a time when all Jews everywhere must unite in supporting the State of Israel against efforts to undermine its existence militarily and economically and to question its character as a democratic state.

We, rabbis of Northern California and Northern Nevada, are committed to the spirit of respect for democratic values and civil liberties articulated in Israel's own Declaration of Independence and in many of its laws; and we urge the government of the State of Israel to take immediate measures to create a mechanism for civil marriage in Israel and to recognize Jewish marriages within Israel by rabbis of all streams of Judaism. We believe that these measures will not only deepen respect for Jewish religious diversity and enhance the principles of democracy in Israel; but they will also strengthen the ties between Israel and world Jewry.

Rabbi Ruth Abusch-Magder, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Mona Alfi, Sacramento, CA  
Rabbi Camille Shira Angel  
Rabbi Melanie Aron, Los Gatos, CA  
Raphael Asher, Walnut Creek, CA  
Rabbi Ryan Bauer, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Allen Bennett, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Allan Berkowitz, San Jose, CA  
Rabbi Linda Bertenthal, San Luis Obispo CA  
Rabbi Mark Bloom, Oakland, CA  
Rabbi David Booth Palo Alto, CA.  
Rabbi James Brandt, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Barnett Brickner, Alameda, CA  
Rabbi Elana Rosen-Brown, San Rafael, CA  
Rabbi Carol Caine, Albany, CA  
Rabbi Shula Stevens Calmann, Sacramento, CA  
Rabbi Steven Chester, Oakland, CA  
Rabbi Jennifer Clayman, Los Altos Hills CA  
Rabbi Eli Cohen, Santa Cruz, CA  
Rabbi David J. Cooper, Piedmont, CA  
Rabbi Mychal Copeland, Mountainview, CA  
Rabbi Menachem Creditor, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Julie Hilton Danan, Chico, CA  
Rabbi Lisa Delson, Burlingame, CA  
Rabbi Lavey Derby, Foster City, CA  
Rabbi Shoshanah Devorah, Ukiah, CA  
Rabbi Sheldon Dorph, Tiburon California  
Rabbi Aderet Drucker, Walnut Creek, CA  
Rabbi Serena Eisenberg, Stanford, CA

Rabbi Dennis J Eisner, San Mateo, CA  
Rabbi Diane Elliot, El Sobrante, CA  
Rabbi Nat Ezray, Redwood City, CA  
Rabbi Yashaia Charles Familant  
Rabbi Fern Feldman, Santa Cruz, CA  
Rabbi Ted Feldman, Petaluma, CA  
Rabbi Larry Friedman, Stockton, CA  
Rabbi Stacy Friedman, San Rafael, CA  
Rabbi Pam Frydman, Daly City, CA  
Rabbi Dan Goldblatt, Danville, CA  
Rabbi Marvin Goodman, Foster City, CA  
Rabbi Paul Gordon, Fresno, CA  
Rabbi Danny Gottlieb, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Roberto D. Graetz, Lafayette, CA  
Rabbi Jessica Zimmerman Graf, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Sarah Graff, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Simcha Green, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Bruce D. Greenbaum, Carmel, CA  
Rabbi C. Michelle Greenberg, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Nicki Greninger, Walnut Creek, CA  
Rabbi Jason Gwasdoff, Stockton CA  
Rabbi Corey Helfand, Foster City, CA  
Rabbi Debbie Israel, Morgan Hill, CA  
Rabbi Margie Jacobs, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Daria Jacobs-Velde, Sebastopol, CA  
Rabbi Joshua Jacobs-Velde, Sebastopol, CA  
Rabbi Valerie Joseph, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Yoel Kahn, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Stuart Kelman, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Lori Klein, Stanford, CA  
Rabbi Darren Kleinberg, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Noa Kushner, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Susan Leider, Tiburon, CA  
Rabbi Michael Lerner, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Sheldon Lewis, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Lisa Levenberg, Los Gatos, CA  
Rabbi Chai Levy, Tiburon, CA  
Rabbi Richard Litvak Aptos, California  
Rabbi Michal Loving, Sacramento, CA  
Rabbi Dana L. Magat, San Jose, CA  
Rabbi Harry A. Manhoff, San Leandro  
Rabbi Paula Marcus, Santa Cruz, CA  
Rabbi Janet Marder, Los Altos Hills, CA  
Rabbi Jacqueline Mates-Muchin, Oakland, CA  
Rabbi Laurie Matzkin, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Mark Melamut, San Francisco, CA

Rabbi Laurence Elis Milder, Pleasanton, CA  
Rabbi Sydney Mintz, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Katie Mizrahi, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Lon Moskowitz, San Luis Obispo, CA  
Rabbi Leah Novick, Carmel, CA  
Rabbi Philip Ohriner, Saratoga, CA  
Rabbi Shoshana Ohriner, Saratoga, CA  
Rabbi Oren Postrel, Emeryville, CA  
Rabbi Ferenc Raj, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Larry Raphael, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Ferenc Raj, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Yoni Regev, Oakland, CA  
Rabbi Michael Rothbaum, Oakland CA  
Rabbi Elisheva Salamo, San Geronimo, CA  
Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi George Schlesinger, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi SaraLeya Schley, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Chaim Schneider, Santa Cruz, CA.  
Rabbi Callie Schulman, San Mateo, CA  
Rabbi Judith Seid, Pleasanton, CA  
Rabbi Hugh Seid-Valencia, San Jose, CA  
Rabbi Miriam Senturia, Albany, CA\  
Rabbi Judy Shanks, Lafayette, CA  
Rabbi Beth Singer, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Jonathan Singer, San Francisco, CA  
Rabbi Myra Soifer, Reno, NV  
Rabbi Idit Solomon, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Leah Kurtz Sudran, Petaluma, CA  
Rabbi Laurie Hahn Tapper, Los Gatos, CA  
Rabbi H. David Teitelbaum, Palo Alto, CA  
Rabbi Mimi Weisel, Berkeley, CA  
Rabbi Sarah Weissman, Los Altos Hills, CA  
Rabbi David White, Vallejo, CA  
Rabbi Greg Wolfe, Davis, CA  
Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusan, San Francisco  
Rabbi Bridget Wynne, Albany, CA  
Rabbi Edward Zerín, San Francisco, CA