

Statement of Purpose and Guiding Principles

At a time when there is concern over the widening gap between the Jews of Israel and North America we are committed to working to close that gap before it becomes greater and irreparable. Moved by the Zionist vision of the founders of the State of Israel, we appreciate the role of Israel in the hearts, minds and lives of the Jewish people throughout our history and pledge to do our part to take constructive steps to support Israel and to strengthen the ties between our two communities.

As a diverse group of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis from North America, we express our commitment to the unity of the Jewish people, and to affirm our unbreakable bond with and support for the State of Israel. Our commitment to the security of the State of Israel and for the preservation of Jewish identity in the Diaspora and State of Israel is enduring and unwavering. We are committed to Israel being a free and democratic Jewish state, which is the goal of Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people.

As such, we respect the democratic process in Israel and appreciate the robust free press and public discourse that takes place in Israel. **We recognize that ultimately, the people of Israel are the ones who must live with the consequences of the decisions they make – whether it pertains to security or other matters.**

Yet we also believe that as the state of the Jewish people, Jews around the world have a stake in the outcome of those decisions, for we have a shared history and destiny. We believe it is crucial that Israel and North American Jewry help and support each other and work together to ensure the vitality and welfare of Judaism, the Jewish people and Jewish communities around the world.

As a result, we believe that the Jewish people is best served by an approach to Judaism in Israel that is tolerant of the various streams of Judaism. Inasmuch as unity does not require uniformity, we encourage our Israeli brothers and sisters to embrace policies and actions that support tolerance for different expressions of Judaism. **We want to encourage diversity of expression of Judaism in Israel and intend to express this in a way that will not diminish support or love for Israel among the Jews of North America.**

As rabbis from different affiliations, we celebrate and experience our Judaism in different ways. Even when we differ or disagree, we affirm that it must be from a position of mutual respect and caring, of love and devotion to each other, and that we take into consideration the different realities of our communities and the impact actions and statements have on each other.

With unconditional love, yet not uncritical support, we are convinced that working together, we can face any challenge. Divided we are weakened and diminished. We recognize that what we say has an impact on those who hear our messages – primarily the American Jewish community. Consequently, we rabbis must be conscious of the impact our words have on the community that

hears them. To that end, **we invite other rabbis to join us in creating a means to constructively express our concerns directly to appropriate parties in Israel while conveying to our fellow Jews in the Diaspora the importance of continued support for the State of Israel.**

We commit to improving our communication, expanding our knowledge of each other, to finding constructive ways to deepen and strengthen the relationship between Israel and our communities and to work constructively and in a cooperative spirit to resolve differences that may arise.