



Advocacy Update

Sent May 30, 2012

Miri Gold Is the First Non-Orthodox Rabbi to be Recognized by the State of Israel

After a seven year struggle in the Israeli courts by the Israel Religious Action Center, IRAC, the court finally requested that the Israeli Attorney General give Miri Gold the title “Rabbi” and a salary equal to that given by the state to Orthodox rabbis. The Attorney General consented to the request of the court. IRAC has won a significant success for Reform rabbis, and indeed for the Reform Movement in Israel, for which Anat Hoffman, Director of IRAC, gives much credit to advocacy by Reform Jews worldwide, which includes WRJ.

Anat Hoffman has asked for letters of thanks to the Israeli government. You can do so by writing to Prime Minister Netanyahu to inform him of our appreciation that Rabbi Miri Gold is finally able to serve her congregation and community as an equal to members of the Orthodox rabbinate.

Advocacy Works: Recommendations for Implementation of the WRJ Statement on Gender Segregation in Israel

To continue current successes in working to end gender segregation and discrimination in Israel, the statement urges that WRJ sisterhood members take the following action steps:

Write letters about the women’s right to equality in Israel. Advocacy letters are most effective when sent as part of campaigns regarding particular issues and legislation.

- WRJ sends alerts on Israeli issues when needed to make an impact. The alerts include links to e-advocacy letters you can send. In some instances, we will urge you to write your own e-mails to Israeli government officials. If so, we provide language for your letters, as well as the name of the person to whom it should be sent, and the contact information. Respond quickly and forward the alerts to your sisterhood members.
- Sign up to receive the IRAC newsletter and check the Women of the Wall (WOW) website. Both provide links for communicating with Israeli officials when needed.

Lead and/or participate in demonstrations on these issues.

- We urge our Israeli women’s groups to participate in demonstrations regarding gender segregation or discrimination organized by IRAC or WOW.
- We call on North American affiliates to work with other Jewish women’s groups and Jewish agencies in their communities to plan and hold meetings and rallies on issues as needed. Recently at WOW’s request, many sisterhoods participated in events at which members were photographed holding the Torah. The photographs were sent to WOW, which used them for an advocacy campaign.

Make comments on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media networks regarding companies that have chosen to remove women from their advertisements in Israel.

For more information on WRJ and Social Justice, visit www.wrj.org/social-justice-home

- At this time, this is an action primarily for WRJ Israel women's groups or North American sisterhood members with many Israeli friends. As far as we currently know, the companies that have removed women from their billboard advertisements in Jerusalem are Israeli and include:

- The Honigman fashion chain advertising posters show only the model's clothed abdomen, a hand, and a purse;

- Jerusalem Light Rail;

- The Fox fashion outlet in the Ramat neighborhood of Jerusalem; and The Studio C fitness gym.

- For additional companies and more information see the IRAC report Excluded, For God's Sake: Gender Segregation and the Exclusion of Women in Public Space in Israel, pp. 47-50.
- Anat Hoffman is checking to see if any North American companies are participating in this exclusion. If so, we will let you know.

Travel to Israel and arrange to participate in an IRAC freedom ride.

Support women's groups, such as WRJ-Israel.

Support other organizations, such as IRAC and WOW, who work for the rights of women in Israel.