



Advocacy Update

Sent August 29, 2012

Update From Our UN Representative, Janet T. Stovin

There have been two big issues for NGOs at the United Nations this summer. The first is the Rio+20 meeting in June with its disappointing stagnation in bringing the issues of ecological and economic sustainability forward. The second has been high-level meetings on the Human Rights of Older Persons and implementing the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Among the issues considered is whether there should be a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, a Rapporteur to review country reports, or both.

The Reform Movement has a long history of working with other UN NGOs on these issues. Honorary WRJ President Norma Levitt has been at the forefront of NGO activities on older persons and intergenerational relations for many years. WUPJ was very active in advocating for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In the coming months, we will be considering our own WRJ policy in light of this ongoing international activity and considering whether any updates are needed.

IRAC Op-Ed From Anat Hoffman: Israel Must Punish Rabbis Who Preach Hatred

After last week's vicious attack by Israeli teens on Arab teens, Anat Hoffman, Director of the Israel Religious Action Center, wrote an op-ed condemning Jewish extremism. She illustrates a disturbing trend toward racist incitements in Israel, with a particular focus on Jewish women and their purity. She writes: "Jews everywhere have the responsibility to respond to racist statements by Jewish extremists. It is our duty as Jews to remind others and ourselves that the Torah commands us to love the stranger 36 times more than any other commandment."

[Read Anat's full op-ed in JTA.](#)

A Fair Minimum Wage

In 2010, the minimum wage was \$7.25 per hour. An annual salary for someone working at a minimum wage totals \$15,080, roughly the same as the poverty level for a single adult with a child. It is impossible to expect to raise a family, or an individual, out of poverty in a minimum wage position.

With a minimum wage that traps those seeking to escape poverty, the time has come to raise the minimum wage, the first such increase since 2007. What's more, by injecting more purchasing power into the pockets of millions of Americans, raising the minimum wage will provide a valuable economic stimulus.

Judaism teaches us that poverty is destructive to human dignity, and that helping people in need is a matter of fundamental principle, not an act of charity. We are told in Deuteronomy 15:11 that "there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you, open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land."

In 2007, WRJ passed its resolution entitled "[Minimum Wage.](#)" which called for an increase to the minimum wage as a component of its support for fair labor practices, worker's rights and economic justice.

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

Urge your Members of Congress to co-sponsor the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2012 and raise the minimum wage, so that working Americans can break free from poverty, and we can all benefit from a stronger economy.