

Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury Valley

To Defend Transgender People's Rights at the Ballot Box This Fall

For Immediate Release

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Sudbury, Mass., July 18, 2018 - [Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury Valley](#) is urging its members and the broader community to defend and protect the rights of transgender citizens in Massachusetts as a pivotal state ballot initiative approaches in November. At that time, Massachusetts will be the first state forced to defend transgender people's rights at the ballot box.

Beth El's Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse a "Yes" vote on Question #3. Question #3 will ask voters whether to uphold a Massachusetts state law that protects the civil rights of transgender people in public places. The law was passed by the legislature with broad support and signed by Governor Charlie Baker in 2016.

A "YES" vote on Question 3 keeps the current law as-is. A "Yes" vote will continue to protect transgender people from discrimination in public accommodations such as restaurants, hotels and hospitals.

John Harper, Vice President of Beth El's Tikkun Olam Committee, said that "the Board's vote represents Beth El's clear, longstanding commitment to pursuing social justice for the vulnerable and disadvantaged. This is a formal, public expression of our indignation at any attempts to deny basic human rights to transgender and non-binary people."

Judy Goldberg, president of the Congregation added that "the Board of Directors was unanimous in endorsing the "yes on 3" declaration, as a reflection of our Jewish values regarding human dignity."

Karen Blumenfeld, a longtime member of Beth El, said, "I'm proud to be a member of Beth El – a sacred community where we take action together to uphold dignity and respect for our trans children, parents, relatives, friends and neighbors."

Another Beth El member, Nicci Meadow, said, "It is wonderful to belong to a community where we are able to explore gender norms, roles and identities in a Jewish context. As Jews, we are especially committed to celebrating and protecting the unique spark within each person that makes them who they are. It is so empowering to do this together within our safe and welcoming community."

Rabbi Josh Breindel, who joined Beth El on July 5, signed the [Freedom for All Faith Leader's Pledge](#) as his first official act of Tikkun Olam at the congregation. "The Torah is very clear: we are made in the Divine image," he explained. "This means that each of us contains holy sparks that inspire our respect and love. This teaching made it easy for me to take this step; it is a clear affirmation of one of the most profound truths of the Jewish tradition."

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