



July 2017

Dear Greater Jewish community,

We wish you to be aware of the stance that the local Jewish Federation of Dutchess County has taken about two actions taken recently by the Government of Israel.

While It is critically important that we continue to voice our unwavering commitment to the Jewish State we feel that it's also important that we continue to communicate our concerns about decisions taken (or about to be taken) by the Israeli Legislation that have a negative impact of Jews in the diaspora and/or stand in conflict with issues of concern to Jews in the diaspora.

As you may have heard, the Government of Israel voted several weeks ago to suspend the long-fought-for resolution that would create an egalitarian prayer space at the Kotel.

We strongly affirm the action taken by the Jewish agency and the JFNA to protest this resolution and to continue to try to elicit a change in this action. We strongly believe that the Kotel should have a space for egalitarian worship.

In addition, the Government of Israel's Ministerial Committee for Legislation approved a draft of a bill that would change the status quo on conversions in Israel by providing total control to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and blocking access to the courts.

Although this draft has not yet been voted upon, (there Is a six-month suspension), we strongly oppose that proposed bill and urge the government of Israel and the Parliament to vote this legislation down and leave in place the current Status Quo which enables the court in Israel to recognize all conversions abroad and in Israel.

We hope that the Israeli government and legislator will take our concerns into consideration, as they continue to review the above issues.

Sincerely,

Betsy Kopstein-Stuts, President, Board of Directors
The Jewish Federation of Dutchess County