

June 27, 2022

San Diego Jewish Communal Leaders Response to Roe V. Wade

Jewish tradition is grounded in obligation and responsibility to ourselves, one another, and our community. As Jewish communal professionals and clergy, we understand Jewish approaches to autonomy and community have long protected the rights of reproductive freedom and justice, as exemplified by cases where health, wellness, and life are at stake.

Jewish experience tells us that our reproductive freedoms are integrally bound to our religious liberty. At the core of the Jewish tradition is the affirmation of the sanctity of life. Further, the tradition recognizes that life does not begin at conception and the wellbeing (spiritual, emotional, and physical) of the parent takes precedence over an unborn fetus.

The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade not only undermines 50 years of legal precedent, but this ruling also stands squarely in the face of the foundational American principle of religious freedom, which affects everyone in the Jewish community. The decision negates decades of progress in the fight for women's rights, and the recognition of women as whole and autonomous human beings.

The decision to overturn Roe v. Wade is deeply painful and distressing to millions, and will have an immediate, lasting, and irreversible impact for all women and those in need of reproductive care across the country. This ruling will exacerbate the reproductive restrictions and health outcome disparities that already disproportionately impact those in communities with less access to healthcare including low-income communities, communities of color, rural communities, immigrants, LGBTQ+, the disabled, and those who are being abused by partners or family members.

In the coming days, months, and years we will continue to fight and advocate for our Jewish values that maintain religious freedom, cherish life, dignity, and enshrine the individual's rights to make their own reproductive choices according to their own conscience. May we find the redemptive strength and courage to restore that which has been stripped away.

Signed by the following community leaders and Rabbis:

Ilene Bernstein and Joan Rosenberg, San Diego Area co-Presidents, Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America

Pam Ferris, President & CEO, Seacrest Village Retirement Communities

Karen Foster Silberman, Chair, Jewish Women's Foundation

Heidi Gantwerk, President and CEO, Jewish Federation of San Diego County

Michael Hopkins, CEO Jewish Family Service of San Diego

Michael Rabkin

Betsy Lynch, CEO Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, Jacobs Family Campus
Nicole Nevarez, Executive Director, Ta'amod
Karen Parry, Executive Director, Hillel of San Diego
Charlene Seidle, Executive Vice President. The Leichtag Foundation
Cheryl Price, Executive Director of the Butterfly Project to the List
Beth Sirull, President and CEO Jewish Community Foundation
Buddy Voit, Executive Director, Camp Mountain Chai

Cantor William Tiep, Temple Solel
Madrikha Beverly Zarnow, Kahal Am - The Humanistic Jewish Community of San Diego
Rabbi Richard Agler
Rabbi Gabi Arad, Jewish Collaborative of San Diego
Rabbi Cantor Arlene Bernstein, Congregation Beth Israel
Rabbi Alexis Berk, Temple Solel
Rabbi Aliza Berk
Rabbi Michael Berk
Rabbi Lenore Bohm
Rabbi David Castiglione, Temple Adat Shalom
Rabbi Laurie Coskey
Rabbi Ralph Dalin, Jewish Federation of San Diego
Rabbi Joshua Dorsch, Tifereth Israel Synagogue
Rabbi Wayne Dosick
Rabbi David Frank
Rabbi Susan Freeman
Rabbi Benj Fried, Temple Emanu-El
Rabbi Jeremy Gimbel, Congregation Beth Israel
Rabbi Phillip Graubart
Rabbi Brad Greenstein
Rabbi Ally Jacobson
Rabbi David Kornberg, Congregation Beth Am
Rabbi Marty Lawson
Rabbi Avi Libman
Rabbi Mathew Marko, Tifereth Israel Synagogue
Rabbi Devorah Marcus, Temple Emanu-El
Rabbi Thomas P. Liebschutz
Rabbi Scott Meltzer, Congregation Ohr Shalom
Rabbi Jason Nevarez, Congregation Beth Israel
Rabbi Alexis Pearce
Rabbi Yael Ridberg, Congregation Dor Hadash
Rabbi Dr. Michael Leo Samuel
Rabbi Ron Shulman
Rabbi Sammy Seid, Congregation Ner Tamid
Rabbi Jonathan Stein
Rabbi-Cantor Cheri Weiss

Signatures as of 7/1/2022