



2018

**AUGUST RECESS
ADVOCACY TOOLKIT**

JCPA

JEWISH COUNCIL
FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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THE JEWISH COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS (JCPA) is the hub of the Jewish community relations network. We advise and support the field by convening the Jewish community to deliberate key issues, and identify and develop policies, strategies, and programs for our network. The JCPA has an unparalleled capacity to mobilize grassroots activism through our network of 16 national and 125 local member agencies. Our policy team serves as a resource for our network and helps the community relations field express the consensus policy views to national leaders and influentials.

August Advocacy: An Overview

In August, most Members of Congress schedule in-district meetings in their home states while Congress is in recess. This time provides an important opportunity for Jewish community relations councils (JCRCs) to advocate on priority issues with members of Congress. JCPA developed this Toolkit, with tips and talking points, to assist you in preparing for these meetings.

2018 Congressional Recess Timeline

Senate Recess: August 6 – 10

House Recess: August 1 – September 3 (Labor Day)

Priority Issues

This year we suggest prioritizing the following issues that are currently before Congress for consideration:

- Ending the separation and detention of immigrant families.
- Keeping our nation's doors open to refugees and asylum seekers.
- Pass a faithful and compassionate federal budget.
- Stopping the delegitimization of Israel.

Summary of Key Messages

Immigration

- Urge Congress to pressure the Administration to end the “zero tolerance” policy and reunify the hundreds of families that remain separated despite a court order to reunify children by July 26.
- Cut funding for family detention and reject all proposals that would expand child detention, with or without parents. Invest instead in effective, human community-based alternatives to detention.
- Support a refugee resettlement cap of at least 75,000 in FY19, which is already insufficient given the severity of the refugee crisis, when the Administration determines the cap in September. Provide the necessary oversight to ensure that the United States resettles the full 45,000 refugees set for FY18.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Federal Budget

- Ensure that FY19 appropriations protect our most vulnerable by increasing funding for anti-poverty programs, such as Medicaid and nutrition and housing assistance; the Census Bureau; and humanitarian aid.

Israel

- Oppose the delegitimization of Israel by cosponsoring the “Israel Anti-Boycott Act” (S. 720/H.R. 1697), which would expand existing U.S. anti-boycott regulations to include boycotts instituted by international governmental organizations like the United Nations and the European Union.

In-District Meetings

Tips for Making a Personal Visit to a Legislator

- Call the legislator's office to make an appointment.
- Follow the scheduler's instructions for requesting a meeting. This may include an email request. Be sure to include the number of people participating and what issues you want to discuss.
- Confirm the appointment a day or two prior to your meeting.
- Make sure to arrive 5-10 minutes early. If the legislator or official is late, be patient and flexible.
- Don't be disappointed if your meeting is with a staff person. There is great value in educating and building a relationship with the key staff people on your issues — they play a vital role in decision-making in the legislative process.
- Bring information about your organization and a one-pager outlining each policy position you are discussing to leave with the policymaker or staffer. You can find prepared one-pagers in the Talking Points section.

Preparing for the Meeting

An effective visit should include the following components:

- A clear statement about your organization and why you are there.
- An explanation of the issue(s) and what you want the decisionmaker to do about it.
- One or more personal stories illustrating why the issue is important to you and your community. *This may be a great opportunity, depending on your legislator's orientation, to discuss your views as a person of faith.*
- A request for a commitment: "will you support/oppose this proposal?"
- A thank you letter.

Assigning Roles

It is important to prepare for your meeting ahead of time by assigning roles and agreeing to time allotments. Considering that you have a limited timeframe for your meeting, it is important to stay focused and to ensure that you cover your full agenda. If you have a small group, give everyone an opportunity to present. If you have a larger group, ensure that you identify speakers. We suggest meeting beforehand to set the agenda and script. Inform your delegation on the position of the legislator that you are meeting with and what you are asking of them.

Leader: Confirms meeting time and location. Introduces the group and the Jewish Community Relations Council and JCPA briefly. Keeps time and ensures that the visit is on track, and that everyone has a chance to speak. Collects business cards from legislative staffer at the end and leaves the legislative leave-behind materials at the end.

Issue Presenter: Delivers the message, making it personal (by telling a story or sharing a personal experience), and speaks to why the legislator should act. Makes “the ask” and is prepared to respond depending on the legislator’s position. (See pages 7-8 for how to deal with different stances).

Social Media Reporter:

- Takes pictures of group during the visit.
- Tweets and shares the experience on Facebook after the visit.

Creating a Meeting Agenda

Opener:

- Express thanks for meeting with the delegation and collect business cards from staff.
- Introduce the group (individually, if a small group).
- Provide brief intro to the JCRC and JCPA: who we are, how many we represent.
- Tell why you are here: to introduce the issue(s) you’re advocating for today.
- Thank legislator for past support. A review of your legislator’s voting record should reveal a vote on a bill or cosponsorship of legislation that you appreciate (www.congress.gov/members).

Issue Presentation:

- State the problem that must be addressed by policy change.
- State the policy solution and why JCPA/JCRCs support this position.
- Personal story: share your experiences or perspective.
- State “the ask,” what they can do (refer to “How to Deal with Agreement or Opposition” on pages 7 and 8).
- Wait for a response – be sure to listen!
- Offer to be a resource or to send additional information.

Wrap-up:

- Review comments, commitments, and follow-up requests for the issue.
- Thank legislator/staff for their time.
- Leave your business card and legislative materials.

After the Meeting

Thank You Letter: It is very important to email a thank you letter to the individual(s) with whom you met. In addition to saying thank you, it should include a written reminder of what took place at the meeting, any action you are asking the legislator to take and, if relevant, their commitment to cosponsor, support, or oppose a specific piece of legislation.

Debrief and Meeting Report: After your visit, it is important to debrief about the meeting and to follow up with any requests for additional information made by the congressional office. We also recommend writing a brief summary of what took place that includes the following:

- Date, time, and name of person with whom you met.
- Questions asked by the legislator or staff person.
- Follow-up materials or information requested by the legislator or staff person.
- Summary of the legislator's position and willingness to support your requests.

Keep this information for future reference, share it with your coalition partners, and email it to Tammy Gilden at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

How to Deal with Agreement or Opposition

What if the policymaker **STRONGLY AGREES** with my position?

- Thank the policymaker.
- **Ask the policymaker to take a leadership role on this issue:**
 - Make a public statement in support of this issue
 - Urge colleagues to support the issue
 - Pressure House or Senate Leadership to take up the issue and to educate undecided colleagues
- **Ask the policymaker's advice about talking with other policymakers**—whom to talk with, what arguments make the best case for the issue, and what media strategy will be most effective in gathering support for the policy.
- **Ask what information or constituency would be helpful in swaying additional policymakers** to your position. Then work to produce these materials or advocates.
- Thank the policymaker again.

What if the policymaker **AGREES** with my position?

- Thank the policymaker.
- **Assure the policymaker of your continued interest in the issue and your continued support for the position they have taken.**
 - Ask if you can count on the policymaker to take more of a leadership role on the issue
 - Ask what the policymaker is currently doing to promote the issue and what the Jewish and broader faith community can do to help
 - Ask if the policymaker is aware of the proposed legislation related to the issue, and follow up with materials if necessary
- **Ask if the policymaker would be willing to help in any way beyond voting.** If yes, refer to the tips under **STRONGLY AGREES**.
- Thank the policymaker again.

What if the policymaker is **UNDECIDED** or **NONCOMMITTAL**?

- Thank the policymaker.
- **Inform the policymaker of your interest in the issue or legislation.**
- **Ask about the policymaker's viewpoint** to investigate whether his/her position arises from personal or political factors, a lack of information, misinformation, or a combination of these factors. Adjust your strategy accordingly.

- Present the case as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Ask if there are specific groups or individuals from whom the policymaker would like to hear on this issue.
- Offer to provide information that will help inform the policymaker about the issue.
- Thank the policymaker again for the opportunity to talk with them.
- Express thanks for their support or disappointment for nonsupport once the policymaker has indicated a position.
- Follow up by providing the information you promised and/or that addresses the policymaker's reservations. Send a positive story from the Member's district and emphasize how individuals in the district would be helped by the proposed legislation.
- Stay in touch to nurture the relationship with the policymaker.

What if the policymaker is **OPPOSED** to my position?

- Thank the policymaker for the opportunity to present your views.
- Determine how strong the policymaker's position is, and upon what it is based. If the opposition is not vehement, it may be worth trying to change his/her position.
- If the policymaker appears movable, present information that addresses his/her concerns. Make sure that the policymaker hears from constituents who support your position. Strategize and present the case most likely to resonate with this particular policymaker.
- Thank the policymaker again for the opportunity to present your views.
- Follow up by providing the information you promised and/or that addresses the policymaker's reservations. Send a positive story from the Member's district and emphasize how individuals in the district would be helped by the proposed legislation.
- Stay in touch to nurture the relationship with the policymaker.

What if the policymaker is **STRONGLY OPPOSED** to my position?

- Thank the policymaker for the opportunity to talk.
- Ask him/her not to lobby colleagues on the issue.
- Write and express your disappointment in the position and/or vote taken. Don't expend your time and energy trying to move this particular policymaker.

Issue Briefs

The following section contains issue briefs with background information and topline messages along with more detailed information. These briefs can serve as talking points for your meetings and double as one-pagers that you can leave behind with legislators and/or their staff.

At the back of this booklet, you will find an Advocacy Report Form that can help you track the outcomes of your meetings and ensure adequate follow-up. We encourage you to share these with JCPA so that we can help advance our network's advocacy.

End Family Separation and Detention

JCPA urges the Administration to immediately rescind its new “zero tolerance” policy and stop detaining and separating families. Traumatizing children and treating immigrants and asylum seekers as criminals by prosecuting them, tearing apart their families, or imprisoning them in dangerous conditions violates the values of family unity, dignity, and justice we hold dear as both Jews and Americans.

In just under two months, the Administration’s “zero tolerance” policy of criminally prosecuting all adults who cross the border, including families and first-time offenders, led authorities to separate over 2,300 children from their parents. Although a federal court ordered the Administration to halt most separations, stop deporting parents without their children, and reunite separated children, the Administration has already failed to meet the court-mandated July 26 reunification deadline. Hundreds of children remain without their parents. Instead the government is circumventing the court by increasing short-term family detention and expediting deportations without adequate due process.

- **Congress must urge the Administration to end the “zero tolerance” policy, which remains in force, and immediately reunify all separated families.** The Administration can end “zero tolerance” at any time, without legislation. Separating children inflicts irreparable psychological trauma on both parents and children, many of whom have already experienced trauma. Most of these families are fleeing violence or coercion in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, countries with the world’s highest murder rates. In the face of such suffering, the United States should maintain support for fair and generous immigration policies as an expression of our country’s core value of refugee protection.
- **Members must cut funding for family detention and reject all proposals that would expand child detention, with or without their parents. Jailing asylum seekers and children is inhumane and cruel.** The Administration is pushing Congress to overturn the health and welfare standards that protect children from long-term detention so that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) can jail families indefinitely, despite widespread opposition from medical professionals and ongoing reports of abuse.
- **Abuse in immigration detention is systemic, and has been for years according to Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Inspector General.** Recently, the [bipartisan leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee recently called](#) for a federal investigation into the “extremely disturbing” reports of physical, [sexual](#), and emotional abuse of detainees, including [minors in ICE custody](#). More [people died in immigration detention in 2017](#) than any year since 2009, which experts believe were linked to substandard medical care. [Children and parents have detailed ongoing issues](#), such as inadequate medical care, denial of food and clean water, and lack of access to basic sanitation in ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) detention facilities.
- **Congress must enhance oversight and accountability of immigration enforcement agencies.** A recent [Inspector General report](#) found that ICE’s inspections and monitoring of detention facilities are ineffective and inadequate, which is particularly disturbing given the long-term pattern and severity of abuse allegations in immigration detention. JCPA is also concerned about ICE’s failure to keep records of the people it was separating and where it sent them, with no

reunification plan in place. The agency's practices have forced absurd policies, such as toddlers representing themselves in immigration court and officials deporting hundreds of parents without their children. There are also pending lawsuits alleging that ICE and CBP agents routinely engage in fraud and abuse to expedite deportations and prevent immigrants from applying for asylum.

- **Congress should reinstate and fund effective, humane community-based alternatives to detention.** For example, the Family Case Management Program, which the Administration ended in 2017, released families together, without ankle monitors, and ensured compliance by providing them with case management and legal counseling to help them navigate the asylum application process and immigration court proceedings. The program had a 99.6% appearance rate at immigration court hearings and a 75% appearance rate for deportations, at a cost of just \$36 a day per family. Meanwhile, detaining a family costs almost \$800 a day.

For more information, please contact Tammy Gilden, Senior Policy Associate at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the hub of the Jewish community relations network, representing over 125 local Jewish community relations councils and 16 national Jewish agencies. Together our network builds consensus on behalf of the entire Jewish community to promote a just and pluralistic American society, advocate for human rights around the world, and support Israel's quest for peace and security.

Keep Our Nation's Doors Open to Refugees and Asylum Seekers

For over 70 years, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) has advocated on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers who hope to build a better life for themselves and their children. Over the past year, the Administration has instituted a number of changes to U.S. asylum and refugee policies, such as significantly reducing overall U.S. refugee admissions, restricting entry for refugees from several predominantly Muslim countries, and expand detention for immigrants and asylum seekers.

The U.S. refugee resettlement cap is currently set at just 45,000 for FY18, the lowest ceiling set by any president since the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established in 1980. It is unlikely that the U.S. will resettle even that many, despite the unprecedented refugee crisis. The United Nations estimates that the number of displaced people due to conflict, violence, and persecution is now 68 million, or 1 in every 100 people globally. By law, the President must set the yearly ceiling for refugee admissions by September 30 after “appropriate consultation” with Congress. Though largely ignored, the stipulation “appropriate consultation” remains an important tool that Congress can to enhance oversight.

- **Congress must support a refugee resettlement cap of at least 75,000 in FY19, which is already insufficient, especially given the severity of the refugee crisis and growing famine in East Africa.** We also urge Congress to provide the necessary oversight to ensure that the United States actually resettles 45,000 refugees in FY18. In order to reach this target, the U.S. must resettle 3,750 refugees per month. We are already thousands of refugees behind where it should be if we are to have any chance of meeting this goal. As a nation built by immigrants and refugees, the U.S. should seek to maximize, not minimize, the number of people we welcome and protect. Family reunification and generous refugee admissions must remain cornerstones of our immigration policy.
- **Closing our nation's doors to immigrants and refugees would contradict the fundamental Jewish belief in “welcoming the stranger.”** The Jewish community has always been deeply committed to maintaining a generous immigration system. We champion a fair and generous legal immigration policies as an expression of our country's core values of refugee protection, family reunification, and economic opportunity.
- **The U.S. has one of the most stringent vetting programs in the world.** Our immigration policy must balance national security concerns with the protection of civil and human rights. We cannot let our concerns about radical Islam undermine a core national purpose—providing a home for immigrants. The American immigrant experience is one of our country's greatest sources of strength. Newcomers are essential to the fabric of our society, enriching our culture and economy.

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Pass a Faithful and Compassionate Federal Budget

Congress is currently determining appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, which would fund the federal government through September 2019. Congress has already agreed to a non-binding “blueprint” for FY19 funding that increases funding for important domestic programs. Now it is critical that Congress follows through with this commitment.

As a reflection of our values, we believe the FY19 budget should provide equitable opportunity and uplift the needs of our nation’s most vulnerable. It is critical that Congress increase funding for anti-poverty programs, such as Medicaid and nutrition and housing assistance; the Census Bureau; and humanitarian aid.

- **All Americans deserve the security of being able to sustain basic living standards.** Vital social safety net programs, such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, federal nutrition assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), unemployment insurance, and refundable tax credits for low-income people, should be protected and improved. Cutting Social Security by slashing Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income would be devastating for people with disabilities and seniors. The Jewish community has a strong commitment to protecting the most vulnerable among us by fully funding social programs as part of our overall commitment and strategy to reduce poverty.
- **We believe feeding America’s hungry is not a political decision, but a moral one.** Food insecurity is one of the most acute hardships many Americans, including children, face across the country. Slashing federal nutrition assistance would leave millions of people, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, and jobless individuals unable to purchase adequate and nutritious food.
- **Every American, regardless of income, is entitled to a safe, affordable home, and the federal government bears primary responsibility, working with state and local governments, to ensure housing is available to all who need it.** Attempts to shift responsibility for social service funding either to the private sector or to the states through block grants and funding cuts place an unacceptable burden on many states already facing fiscal crisis.
- **Congress must maintain offices and programs across government agencies that are dedicated to combating discrimination in policing, housing, employment, education, and other areas based on race, gender, religion, and national origin.** Eliminating or defunding these critical initiatives could set back key civil rights gains for decades.
- **Congress should provide a sufficient funding *ramp-up* for the 2020 Census to ensure a successful count—one that includes all communities equally.** Census data are used for everything from allocating federal funding to determining congressional representation. Underfunding our nation’s largest peacetime undertaking could greatly diminish our ability to even reduce the severe undercounting of “hard-to-count” populations like low-income and Limited English Proficient households, people of color, and young children. Adding a

citizenship question would also adversely affect response rates, especially among these marginalized populations. If the census is not fair and accurate, the American public will be robbed of representation and needed resources for years to come.

- **Congress must maintain international programs that focus on helping developing nations secure basic human rights for their people, including access to education and the elimination of hunger, particularly among children.** In the face of an unprecedented refugee crisis and growing famine in East Africa, it is essential that we fully fund refugee resettlement and humanitarian assistance programs.

For more information, please contact Tammy Gilden, Senior Policy Associate at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

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Fight the Delegitimization of Israel

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement is a global campaign to isolate Israel through economic, cultural, and political pressure. This movement unfairly compares Israel to genocidal regimes in an attempt to undermine the Israel's legitimacy. While BDS advocates claim to be seeking a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the movement undermines the internationally-supported peace process and decreases chances for a two-state outcome.

The Jewish community relations field has worked tirelessly to deter BDS from taking hold in the United States and has supported more than 22 states that have passed legislation. JCPA believes these bills send a strong message regarding Congress' commitment to opposing BDS and supporting the ideals of a two-state outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **Members of Congress should cosponsor the “Israel Anti-Boycott Act” (S. 720/H.R. 1697), which would expand existing U.S. anti-boycott regulations to include boycotts instituted by international governmental organizations like the United Nations and the European Union.** This bill would help discourage them from taking steps to unfairly single out and economically isolate Israel.
- **Passage of the legislation is now more critical than ever.** Evidence suggests that the U.N. Human Rights Council intends to promote new anti-Israel boycott activity. In January 2018, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that it was investigating more than 200 companies—including 22 American companies—for inappropriate activities in the “Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.” The report also threatened action against the companies even though their activity complies with U.S. law.
- **This bill will protect American companies.** In March 2016, the U.N. Human Rights Council passed a resolution to establish a “blacklist” of companies operating or investing, directly or indirectly, beyond the “Green Line,” including in East Jerusalem. Drafts of the blacklist include American companies, such as AirBNB, Caterpillar, Remax.
- **The final bill states that only commercial speech made in an official capacity can be the basis for investigations and enforcement of the law; individual speech made in a personal capacity is protected.** Both the Senate and House versions of the bill have been significantly revised to address First Amendment concerns raised by previous drafts.
- **The House Foreign Affairs Committee has already unanimously passed H.R. 1697, which now awaits a vote by the full House.**

For more information, please contact Stephanie Hausner, Deputy Director of JFNA's Israel Action Network, at Stephanie.Hausner@JewishFederations.org.

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Advocacy Report Form

NAME: _____

COMMUNITY: _____

MEMBER OF CONGRESS (OR STAFF) MET WITH: _____

ISSUE(S) DISCUSSED:

HOW DID THE LEGISLATOR RESPOND TO YOUR REQUEST FOR SUPPORT?

DID THE LEGISLATOR NEED MORE INFORMATION ON ANY ISSUE OR REQUEST
ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP?

Please return this form to Tammy Gilden at tgilden@thejcpa.org

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