

JCPA

JEWISH COUNCIL
FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

POLICY COMPENDIUM

INTRODUCTION.....	1
ISRAEL, WORLD JEWRY, AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS.....	2
Israel and the Middle East	2
U.S. - Israel Relations	2
Peace Process	2
Foreign Aid to Israel	5
Economic Sanctions Including Divestment.....	5
Israel’s Environment	6
Israel and the United Nations/International Community	6
Jewish - Arab Co-Existence	7
Israeli MIAs.....	7
American Jewish – Israel Relations	7
Jerusalem.....	8
Palestinian “Right of Return”	8
Iraq	8
Arab Economic Boycott.....	8
Environment	9
Travel to Israel	9
Teaching about the Middle East.....	9
Social Justice in Israel	9
Israelis Evacuated by the Disengagement.....	9
Israelis Attacked and Displaced by Lebanon War	9
Israel’s Security Fence	10
World Jewry	10
Anti-Semitism Related To Middle Eastern Tensions.....	10
Jews in the Former Soviet Union	10
Ethiopian Jews.....	11
Iranian Jews - Iran 10	11
Argentinean Jewry.....	11
Jews in Central and Eastern Europe.....	11
International Anti-Semitism	12
International Religious Freedom.....	12
Venezuelan Jewry	13
Jews from Arab Countries.....	13
U.S. Foreign Policy.....	13
Support of United Nations.....	14
Terrorism, Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction.....	14
Austria	14
Germany.....	14
Africa.....	15
Foreign Aid (General)	15
Boycotts.....	15
Iran	16

Dependence on Foreign Energy Sources.....	17
International Human Rights (General).....	17
International Human Rights	17
International Criminal Court	18
Kosovo	18
Bosnia.....	18
Persecution of Religious Minorities.....	18
Rwanda.....	19
Tibet	19
Europe	19
Somalia.....	19
Haitian Refugees	19
Kurds	19
Advancing Women's Rights	19
International Family Planning	19
Stopping the Genocide in Sudan	20
International Debt Cancellation.....	21
Opposition to Torture	21
Human Trafficking.....	21
JEWISH SECURITY AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS	24
American Government and Pluralistic Democracy	24
American Government: Protecting Democratic Pluralism.....	24
Campaign Finance Reform.....	24
Court Stripping.....	24
Gun Safety, Crime, and Violence.....	25
Judicial Nominees	26
Military.....	26
Non-Profit Sector	26
Religion and Politics	27
Rule of Law.....	27
Science and Politics.....	27
Term Limits.....	28
Voting Rights and Equal Protection.....	28
Anti-Semitism and Hate Crimes.....	28
Anti-Semitism	28
Anti-Semitism Related To Middle Eastern Tensions.....	29
Boycotts.....	29
Hate Crimes - Combating Bias-motivated Hatred in America.....	29
Separation of Religion and State	31
Overview	31
Charitable Choice	31
Disaster Response	32
Free Exercise of Religion.....	32
Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act	32

Language and Identity Schools	33
Religious Symbols in Public Places	33
School Prayer - Religion in Public Schools	33
Stem Cell and Therapeutic Cloning Research.....	33
Vouchers.....	34
Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	35
Overview: Civil Rights and Individual Liberties	35
Affirmative Action, Race and Criminal Justice	36
AIDS	37
Civil Liberties and Civil Rights of Gays and Lesbians	37
Civil Liberties and Security.....	37
Death Penalty	40
Death Penalty Moratorium	41
Gender Identity Discrimination.....	41
Flag Desecration.....	41
Free Speech-Attacks on Advocacy by Non-Profit Organizations	41
Free Speech Challenges in an Age of Cyber-Technology.....	41
Racial Profiling by Police Departments	42
Opposition to Torture	42
Workplace Religious Freedom Act	42
Holocaust	42
Holocaust.....	42
Assets Restitution and Needy Holocaust Survivors	43
Long Term Health Care for Holocaust Survivors	44
Nazi War Criminals.....	44
Inter-religious Relations.....	44
Catholic-Jewish Relations	45
Mainline Protestant-Jewish Relations	45
Evangelical-Jewish Relations.....	46
Muslim-Jewish Relations	46
Mormon-Jewish Relations.....	46
Other Faith Communities	46
Misleading and Aggressive Proselytization	47
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.....	48
Anti-Poverty	48
Emergency Funding and Disaster Relief	48
Poverty and Welfare Reform.....	49
Minimum Wage.....	50
Living Wage.....	50
Budget and Tax Policy	51
Social Security Reform	51
Housing, Hunger, and Homelessness	52
Affordable Housing.....	52
Strengthening Families and Children	52

Sweatshops and Child Labor.....	53
The Causes and Prevention of Crime and Violence.....	53
Predatory Lending.....	53
Education.....	54
Jewish Day School Education.....	54
Public Education Policy.....	54
Charter Schools.....	54
Public School Choice.....	55
Health Care.....	55
Overview.....	55
Long Term Care and Support Services for the Elderly.....	56
Prescription Drug Coverage.....	56
Mental Health.....	56
The Environment and Public Health.....	57
Sexual Education in Public Schools.....	57
Stem Cell and Therapeutic Cloning Research.....	57
Medicaid.....	58
Racial Disparities in Healthcare.....	58
Immigrants and Refugees.....	58
Comprehensive Immigration Reform.....	59
Political Asylum Protection.....	61
Intergroup Relations.....	62
Race and Ethnicity.....	62
Racial Stereotypes, Epithets and Rhetoric.....	62
Affirmative Action.....	62
The Census.....	63
Election Reform.....	63
Transatlantic Slave Trade.....	63
African American Heritage.....	64
Labor.....	64
The Right to Form Unions and Bargain Collectively.....	64
Women's Issues.....	64
Right to Reproductive Choice.....	64
Violence Against Women, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination.....	65
Advancing Women's Rights.....	65
Human Trafficking.....	65
Other.....	66
Civic Engagement and Volunteerism.....	66
Non-Profit Sector.....	66
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.....	67
Core Principles.....	67

Stewardship	67
Environmental Justice	67
Responsibility to Future Generations	67
Prevention of Harm	67
Public Involvement in Decision-Making	67
Citizens' Right to Know.....	67
The Common Good.....	67
Energy Independence	67
Equitable Distribution of Responsibility	67
Governmental Compliance.....	67
U.S. Leadership	68
Moral Leadership	68
Environmental Health and Justice	68
Equal Protection from Pollution and Degradation	68
Product Testing and the Right to Know	68
Pollution Prevention	68
Public Health Research	68
Nuclear Waste	69
Regulatory Procedures	69
Climate Change and Energy Policy.....	69
Overview	69
Climate Change and Energy Independence.....	69
Climate Change and Poverty	69
Dependence on Foreign Energy Sources.....	69
Domestic Energy Production.....	70
Energy Conservation and Clean Energy Technologies	70
International Agreements on Global Climate Change.....	70
Domestic Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions	71
Economic Displacement.....	71
Market Incentives	71
Utility Regulation.....	71
Biological Diversity	71
Public Lands.....	71
Endangered Species.....	71
International Sustainable Development.....	72
Other	72
Urban and Community Planning.....	72
Conservation of Natural Resources.....	72
Agriculture	72

INTRODUCTION

The JCPA Policy Compendium is a compilation of the current policy of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. The positions set forth in this Compendium were taken by the JCPA in Resolutions, Joint Program Plans, Agendas for Public Affairs, and in various studies taken through the years. As new positions are adopted by the agency, they will be added to this Compendium which will be made available on the JCPA website.

The Policy Compendium is not an exhaustive record of all policies ever taken by the JCPA during its more than 50 year history. That would be a massive document many thousands of pages long. We look forward to the day, no doubt soon, when technology will enable us to place the entire rich historical record of JCPA policies at our fingertips. The Policy Compendium, however, is a different document entirely. It is an authoritative record of the current positions of the JCPA.

Eliminated from the Compendium are the background text that provided the context for the statements but did not express policy positions. Neither does this Compendium include the full history of each position. In many instances positions were restated, often multiple times, over the years – and policies evolved in light of changing conditions. Where a policy position was superseded by a subsequent statement on the same subject, the most recent policy statement is included in the Compendium. In several instances different aspects of the same issue were covered in subsequent years. In those situations, each policy position is included. In all instances, the year and source are noted. Where a policy position was rendered entirely moot by historical circumstances, it has been eliminated. An addendum will be drafted that will include those subjects addressed in policies many years ago which might not be moot, but have not been reexamined in recent years.

ISRAEL, WORLD JEWRY, AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

U.S. - Israel Relations

The JCPA calls upon the United States to continue to build upon its special partnership with Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East (Resolution adopted in February 2001); supports continued strengthening of the U.S.-Israel alliance at the governmental and grass roots levels; adequate funding for the Israel and U.S.-sponsored "Arrow" anti-missile initiatives; and close United States-Israel coordination of peace initiatives (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001).

Peace Process

In June 2002, President Bush outlined a vision, which contemplated the possibility of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side. Such a vision, however, will only be realized when a Palestinian leadership emerges that accepts the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state, takes effective action to end all violence and incitement against Israelis and Jews, recognizes the historical and religious attachment of the Jewish people to Jerusalem, and foregoes the claim that all Palestinian refugees have a "right" to return to their villages and towns inside Israel. (Resolution adopted in February 2003). The JCPA reaffirms its strong support for Israel's pursuit of a secure and lasting peace with her Arab neighbors; and calls for active U.S. facilitation and mediation of the peace process. Differences between the parties must be resolved through direct, bilateral negotiations based on the Oslo Accords and UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (Resolution adopted in June 1999; Resolution adopted in February 2000; Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001), and unilateral actions that contradict them should be avoided (Agenda 1999-2000).

The JCPA pledges to reinvigorate its solidarity with and action on behalf of Israel; expresses support for Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon's search for a secure and lasting peace in the Middle East, as with all of his predecessors (Resolution adopted in February 2001); expresses its support for the Israeli government and its solidarity with the Israeli people during this difficult period, which has seen widespread violence; and sends our condolences to the families who have lost loved ones, whether Arabs or Jews (Statement adopted in October 2000).

The JCPA believes responsibility for the violence falls squarely on the shoulders of Chairman Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority (PA); deplores the rioting, the shootings by Fatah street gangs (Tanzim), the brutal lynching of Israeli soldiers in Ramallah, and the destruction of Jewish holy places in Nablus and Jericho. Regrettably, all of these represent gross violations of past agreements signed by Chairman Arafat, particularly the Oslo Accords, which the JCPA has consistently supported; and calls for the re-arrest of Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist leaders released from PA prisons (Statement adopted in October 2000). The JCPA disapproves of Chairman Arafat's decision not to grasp the outstretched Israeli hand for peace at Camp David, which has set back prospects for advancing negotiations and caused many in Israel and the American Jewish community to lose confidence in him as a peace partner (Statement adopted in October 2000). The JCPA calls on Chairman Yasser Arafat and other leaders of the PA to stop the Palestinian-initiated violence, cease anti-Israel incitement, eliminate hatred toward Israel and Jews being taught in Palestinian schools and fulfill all of their obligations under the Oslo Accords (Resolution adopted in February 2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001).

The JCPA urges Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and other moderate states in the Middle East to encourage the Palestinians to move in this direction; to realize Arab summit statements critical of Israel and the severing

of relations with Israel by Morocco, Tunisia, and Oman only undermine chances for returning to a constructive political process (Statement adopted in October 2000); to live up to their commitments to eradicate anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement and to begin to seriously educate their populations – children and adults – on the peace process, tolerance and non-violence; and to promote normal relations with the people of Israel. (Statement adopted in October 2000; Resolution adopted in February 2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001).

The JCPA calls on Syria, in demonstration of good faith to Israel, to cease to publish incendiary anti-Semitic articles in its press; and encourages the Syrian leadership to issue public statements favorable to reconciliation with Israel and begin preparing its citizenry for peace (Resolution adopted in February 2000).

The JCPA appreciates the overwhelming support demonstrated by Congress in adopting measures that strengthen Israel and prospects for genuine peace in the region; opposes any aid to the PA if Chairman Arafat unilaterally declares an independent Palestinian state - while supporting humanitarian and democracy-building assistance to the Palestinians through programs run by responsible non-governmental organizations (Statement adopted in October 2000); supports close monitoring of U.S. assistance to the Palestinians to ensure that it is used to further the cause of peace (Agenda 2000-2001); calls for generous U.S. security and economic assistance to Israel and its peace partners (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001); encourages President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell to continue the important U.S. role of encouraging and assisting the parties to reach agreements; welcomes the administration's stated intention to move beyond the Palestinian-Israeli issue and to focus sustained attention on threats to regional stability emanating from Iran and Iraq; calls upon the U.S. to press Syria to rein in Hezbollah terrorists who continue to attack Israeli targets from southern Lebanon (Resolution adopted in February 2001); and welcomes statements by senior U.S. government officials and members of Congress opposing the Arab states initiatives to revive UN General Assembly Resolution 181 and to convene a conference of the signatories to the Fourth Geneva Convention, actions, which can only serve to undermine the peacemaking environment (Resolution adopted in June 1999).

The JCPA mourns the loss of innocent Israeli and Palestinian lives, the enormous suffering and the human toll the conflict has had on both societies. At the same time, we condemn the decision of the Palestinian leadership to use deadly terrorist acts as a tool to achieve political goals. The continued failure of that leadership to prepare its people for peace, to stop the teaching of hate and to abandon, finally, its goal of destroying the state of Israel, has contributed enormously to the deteriorating conditions in the area. We support Israel's efforts to suppress terrorism by any reasonable means. We further support Israeli government efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the non-combatant population. We support Israeli efforts to exercise great caution to minimize the deaths of innocent Palestinians, including those who are caught in the cross-fire when Palestinian forces intentionally position themselves among civilian populations. We support the Israeli government's continued efforts to prevent any vigilante actions by individuals directed against Palestinians and/or Israelis in the West Bank, Gaza, or in Israel proper. We support the vital continued facilitating role the United State has historically played in the Middle East process. We urge active efforts by the American government to work with Israeli, Palestinian, and other Middle Eastern leaders to find common ground and a road that will lead to a cessation of violence and a resumption of negotiations, while ensuring that no pressure is placed on Israel to take steps that would jeopardize its citizens' security and decrease prospects for peace. We further endorse President Bush's call for such reforms as a necessary step toward the possibility of enduring peace. We support the special relationship between the United States and Israel as two allied democracies in an international campaign against terrorism. As both countries confront an extensive network of Islamic extremist groups, including Al Qaeda, that vow destruction here and abroad, we express our gratitude to the United States for its strong support of Israel, including its growing recognition of the common threat faced by both nations.

We call on the United States and the international community to intensify their efforts to pressure those specific governments that finance and glorify terrorism to cease all support of terrorism. We also urge sustained efforts to encourage political, educational and economic reform in Arab and Muslim states as well as Palestinian society, to develop democratic, pluralistic, free and open societies with a commitment to the rule of law and human rights. We express our outrage about the continuous hateful anti-Semitism conveyed through government-controlled media, religious institutions, and schools in much of the Arab and Islamic world, including the Palestinian Authority. We call upon the Administration to pay close attention to incitement in the Arab media. We urge American Jews to maintain a strong sense of unity and solidarity with the people of Israel, while recognizing that within this solidarity there is a diversity of views on some matters of Israeli government policy. We welcome that diversity as healthy debate provided that it is not aimed at weakening American support so critical for Israel's security. The JCPA encourages its member agencies to share these positions and views with members of the Jewish community, U.S. and Israeli officials, and opinion-molders in the general community. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum.)

The JCPA believes that new circumstances, especially the passing of Yasser Arafat, offer an opportunity to advance the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. The community relations field is encouraged to convey the aforementioned positions and messages to members of the Jewish community, to decision-makers and opinion molders in the general community, to the administration and Congress, as well as to leaders in Israel, the Arab world and the international community. (Resolution adopted at the 2005 Plenum.)

Israel, in accord with the Roadmap, has undertaken responsibilities with respect to settlement activity including the dismantling of unauthorized outposts. With regard to the issue of settlements generally, we recognize that within our own community there are divergent views about current and future policies of the Israeli government toward settlements. At the same time, we are united in the belief that the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not Israeli settlements but the continued unwillingness of the Palestinian national leadership and most Arab states to accept the state of Israel as a permanent sovereign Jewish state in the Middle East within secure borders. (Resolution adopted at the 2008 Plenum)

The JCPA believes that the Bush Administration should be commended for its active diplomacy in this arena, including its leadership in convening the Annapolis conference and its recognition that direct bilateral negotiations between the two parties -- free of external pressures and deadlines, and conducted in the spirit of reconciliation and compromise -- is the surest path to peace; for its efforts to expand support for peace and security throughout the region; and for its steadfast commitment to Israel's security. The organized American Jewish community should support the Government of Israel's insistence that the Palestinian Authority recognize Israel as a Jewish State.

The organized American Jewish community should affirm its support for two independent, democratic and economically viable states -- the Jewish State of Israel and a State of Palestine -- living side-by-side in peace and security. We note, with sorrow, that Israel's repeated offers to establish "two democratic states living side by side in peace and security," have been met, time after time, by violence, incitement and terror. (Resolution adopted at the 2008 Plenum)

Palestinians should receive closely monitored assistance in building the political, economic, and security institutions necessary to lay the foundation for statehood.

Active support of religious leadership can play an important role in improving the peacemaking environment. We encourage implementation of the promising commitments in the recent Communiqué of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land.

The international community should continue its policy of isolating Hamas unless it fundamentally transforms itself and meets the international community's three demands.

As the Israeli government enters negotiations on permanent status issues (including settlements, borders, Jerusalem, and refugees) to reach a comprehensive and just peace agreement with the Palestinians, the organized Jewish community should support those efforts, consistent with our longstanding tradition of supporting the efforts of Israel's government to achieve peace and security. (Policy Adopted by the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

(Dissent: The Orthodox Union does not agree with and dissents from the statement that “The organized American Jewish community should affirm its support for two independent, democratic and economically viable states – the Jewish State of Israel and a State of Palestine – living side-by-side in peace and security.”)

As stated in our amendment to the resolution's text, “[w]e note, with sorrow, that Israel's repeated offers to establish ‘two democratic states living side by side in peace and security, ‘have been met, time after time, by violence, incitement, and terror.”

Hamas controls the Gaza strip and continues to wage open warfare and terrorism against Israel. The Palestinian Authority, which controls the Palestinian areas in the West Bank, has not demonstrated sufficient capacity or willingness, as noted by the resolution, to prepare its people for recognizing Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and the homeland of the Jewish people. If anything, such a statement appears to reward the very acts of terrorism and anti-Israel behavior that other provisions of the resolution criticize.

The Orthodox Union further disagrees with and dissents from the resolution's statement that the American Jewish community should support an Israeli government's negotiation efforts with regard to the status of Jerusalem – should that include the Government of Israel's possible assent to the re-division of the Holy City which the global Jewish community continues to view as the “eternal and indivisible capital of Israel and the Jewish people.”)

Foreign Aid to Israel

The JCPA supports adequate funding for the Israel and U.S.-sponsored “Arrow” anti-missile initiatives; generous U.S. foreign assistance to Israel and its peace partners (Agenda 1999-2000).

Economic Sanctions Including Divestment

The JCPA believes that Economic sanctions against companies doing business with Israel evince a misunderstanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and are a cause for great concern. They polarize people and communities in such a way that the actions themselves, and not peace, become the central issue, making constructive actions for peace less possible; Efforts to single Israel out for economic sanctions, to the exclusion of other regions and nations around the world, evidence a troubling double standard that poses a serious challenge to intergroup relations; Support of economic sanctions against companies doing business with Israel reward intransigence by suggesting that international pressure can replace efforts to negotiate in good faith; Economic sanctions targeting Israel would also adversely affect the Palestinian people, as the Israeli and Palestinian economies are intertwined, and thousands of Palestinians work in Israel. Attacks on the economic life of the Israeli people not only undermine Israel's

survival but also the economic viability of Israeli Arabs and Palestinians and contribute to instability in the region. They detract from the goal of a formation of a lasting and solid peace based on co-existence, economic relations and trade as well as other needed aspects of normalization that are crucial to the building of that long dreamed-of peace; and, Those seeking to hasten peace should focus on efforts of reconciliation, including investment in the many meaningful coexistence programs, that are necessary to foster a generation of Israelis and Palestinians which will work and live side-by-side and move past the teaching of hate and the resort to violence.

The community relations field should Educate and encourage the Jewish community, including the campus community, to engage in dialogue within local communities with other faith and community groups to build understanding and develop bridges of communication; and, Actively engage religious, civic, political, labor, academic and other institutions to inform the community at large about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to oppose the use of economic sanctions, including shareholder actions and divestment, as tools to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and support efforts to change such policies where they have been adopted. Joint travel opportunities can be an important part of this effort. (Resolution adopted at the 2005 Plenum)

Israel's Environment

The JCPA believes that pollution and the depletion of natural resources in Israel threaten public health, future economic viability, and regional stability the Jewish tradition, informed by primary Jewish sources and by contemporary Jewish insights, includes a mandate to cultivate, protect and nurture the environment; the organized Jewish community has an opportunity to help Israel benefit from the substantial environmental expertise of the United States — through continued support and further development of cooperative projects between the Israeli and United States governments. Faced with these threats to the health and well being of Israel's population, and in the spirit of friendship and mutual benefit that has long characterized the relationship between the United States and Israel The JCPA therefore resolves to support the passage of legislation in Congress which would allocate previously undesignated funding for the implementation of the U.S./Israel MOU on environmental cooperation; educate the Jewish community about the severity and urgency of the environmental crisis in Israel and urge our members to make tackling this issue a priority in the upcoming year; work in coalition with both faith-based and environmental organizations to help bring American expertise and resources to bear on the environmental problems in Israel; encourage JCPA agencies and communities to aid in the search for research grants that address these issues. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum.)

ISRAEL AND THE UNITED NATIONS/INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The JCPA supports enhanced relations between Israel and the international community; initiatives by the UN and other international bodies that reinforce the peace process; expanded diplomatic and economic relations between Israel and the Arab world; Israel's admission as a full-fledged member of the UN's Western European and Others Group (WEOG); recognition of Israel's Magen David Adom (red star of David) as an official emblem of the movement along with the red cross and red crescent (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001); rejects one-sided United Nations resolutions that condemn Israel for employing "excessive force" (Statement adopted in October 2000); urges the U.S. to support greater political and economic cooperation between the international community and Israel; encourage other countries to sharply reassess their posture toward Israel in the UN, in particular the votes of most member countries on anti-Israel resolutions in the General Assembly (JPP 1993-1994)

Jewish - Arab Co-Existence

The JCPA calls for continuing support by the organized Jewish community for coexistence projects in Israel designed to improve relationships between Israeli Jews and Arabs; applauds the efforts by many of our communities to enhance Israeli Jewish/Arab relations and encourages community relations agencies to work in partnership with local federations, where appropriate, to strengthen these co-existence programs and to include access to such programs on their missions; and supports Israel's commitment to maintain a strong vibrant democracy with active participation by all its citizens (Agenda 1999-2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001); condemns the violent and lawless acts committed by a small minority of Israeli Arab citizens during the riots of September 2000 and anyone who expresses support for any acts of terrorism, including such acts carried out by Hamas and Hezbollah; and reaffirms that Israel was created as a Jewish state, must continue to be supported as a Jewish state, and categorically reject any suggestions that would compromise the institutions that make Israel a Jewish state; applauds the Israeli government's decision to significantly increase its financial commitment to predominantly Arab communities within Israel – to improve both infrastructure and social conditions; believes that such steps will help to reduce the level of tension within Israeli society and strengthen Israel's security; and commends the government's decision to establish a commission to investigate Israel's response to Israeli Arab rioting (Resolution adopted in February 2001).

Israeli MIAs

The JCPA feels passionately about the fate of our Israeli brothers and sisters; is especially concerned with the plight of those held captive in Lebanon by the Hezbollah in clear violation of international law and the UN-endorsed agreement in regard to Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon; and urges the United States government, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the international community, human rights groups and people of goodwill everywhere to do everything possible to secure their immediate release and safe return to their families. (Resolution adopted in February 2001; Statement adopted in October 2000); urges the American and Israeli governments to keep the issue of Israeli MIAs on their diplomatic agendas and pledges to support efforts to increase public awareness of the MIAs (Resolution adopted in 1996; Resolution adopted in 1997).

American Jewish – Israel Relations

The JCPA supports efforts to develop pragmatic and consensus-based solutions to religious and personal status issues in Israel; programs that educate the Jewish community regarding the complexity of religion-state issues in Israel; initiatives that foster unity, cohesiveness, mutual respect, and tolerance among diverse segments of Israeli society; continued philanthropic support to address the humanitarian needs of all the people of Israel; and programs that strengthen the bonds between Israeli and American Jews (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001).

The JCPA will work vigorously in support of efforts to condemn Jewish extremist rhetoric and violence, and to promote intracommunal dialogue. We will urge the full spectrum of religious institutions in Israel and the American Jewish community to consistently condemn explicit extremist rhetoric or hate speech; encourage the development of new initiatives through Israeli and American Jewish institutions, including Jewish-Jewish dialogue, to promote civility and respect for democratic values; counter any attempts to characterize an entire segment of the Jewish community as being monolithic or supportive of the kind of extremist rhetoric that can create a volatile atmosphere: encourage the teaching of Jewish traditions of mutual respect, democratic values and civility as part of the core curriculum in all Israeli and American-Jewish educational institutions; urge all Jewish institutions in Israel, the United States and elsewhere to cultivate an atmosphere of civil and respectful communal discussion on issues related to the peace process and other controversial issues. (JPP 1996-1997)

The JCPA will participate in the wider Jewish communal effort to shape the future of American Jewish-Israel relations, particularly Jewish identity building activities, such as expanding the number of young Jews spending periods of time in Israel, and supporting preparatory and post-experience activities for these individuals; continue to examine the nature and extent of its involvement in those internal public affairs issues in Israel that have implications for American Jewish-Israel relations; and explore joint initiatives with Israel that reflect the Jewish tradition of tikkun olam and that strengthen the bonds between the American Jewish community and Israel. (JPP 1995-1996)

(Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Congregations of America considers this topic to be outside the purview of the JCPA.)

The JCPA continues to support Israeli government programs and initiatives by private organizations that promote democracy and pluralism in Israel...we support the principle of electoral reform in Israel as a means of strengthening Israeli democracy and the ability of the government to act decisively. (JPP 1992-1993)

(Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Congregations of America considers this topic to be outside the purview of the JCPA.)

Jerusalem

The JCPA supports the preservation of an undivided Jerusalem as Israel's capital under Israeli sovereignty (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001; Resolution adopted in February 2001); continues to call for the swift implementation of the Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act of 1995, acknowledging Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and calling for the immediate transfer of the United States Embassy to that city (Resolution adopted in February 2001); deplores attempts by Chairman Arafat and other Arab leaders to deny Jerusalem's unique place within Jewish religion and history; and reaffirms our support for Jerusalem as the eternal, undivided, Capital of Israel. (Agenda 1999-2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001)

Palestinian "Right of Return"

The JCPA rejects any effort, under the banner of the "right of return," to force Israel to accept hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, a claim which has no legitimacy and is nothing more than a formula for Israel's destruction (Agenda 1999-2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001)

Iraq

The JCPA strongly supports the Administration's efforts to bring about Iraqi compliance with United Nations resolutions adopted in the wake of Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait and Israel (Resolution adopted in 1998); and endorses the objectives of U.S. policy to obtain withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, to protect foreign nationals, especially American citizens being held against their will by Iraqi authorities, to maintain the free flow of oil in the Middle East and to deter Saddam Hussein from aggression against Saudi Arabia and any other state in the region. (Resolution adopted in 1990)

Arab Economic Boycott

While the primary boycott [Arab boycott of Israel and Israeli companies] is appropriately a subject for discussion in the peace process, the JCPA believes that an end to the secondary and tertiary boycotts should be aggressively pursued outside that framework because the targets are companies from the U.S. and other countries, which are not involved in the Arab-Israeli dispute (JPP 1992-1993).

Environment

The JCPA calls on the Israeli government to address the rapidly deteriorating environmental conditions in Israel. The Palestinian Authority and neighboring countries are also called upon to remedy environmental challenges that impact the entire region. (Agenda 2000-2001)

Travel to Israel

The JCPA reaffirms its unflinching support for the Jewish State; encourages all American Jews to visit Israel in the very near future as an expression of their solidarity with the people and the land of Israel (Resolution adopted in June 2001).

Teaching about the Middle East

The JCPA encourages the field to identify problems with respect to anti-Israel bias in curriculum materials for primary and secondary schools and teacher training programs on the Middle East; work with local school officials to promote programs and materials that create a better understanding of Israel and the challenges it faces (JPP 1994-1995); the approach to this issue should not be exclusively reactive...Academic and “think tank” institutions should be encouraged to publish and disseminate curricular materials and to sponsor teacher-training programs that portray Middle East issues fairly and accurately (JPP 1992-1993).

Social Justice in Israel

The gap between the rich and poor in Israel has continued to grow, with Israel now rated second in the Western world, after the United States, as having the largest gap in income. The hardest hit tend to be Ethiopian Jews, recent immigrant communities, Mizrachim (Jews from the Middle East and North Africa), and/or families living in smaller development towns. Arab citizens of Israel, roughly 20 percent of the population, also suffer tremendously from these problems. We as an American Jewish community need to renew our commitment to assist those Israelis in greatest need. We should do more to help address the social and economic inequities within Israel. This includes narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor, improving educational opportunities for all Israelis, especially in development towns and immigrant communities such as Ethiopian Jews, and ensuring that all citizens of Israel are treated to an equal share of social services. (Resolution adopted at the 2003 Plenum).

Israelis Evacuated by the Disengagement

The Israeli citizens evacuated from their homes in Gaza and northern Shomron amidst the hope that peace would follow still await the resources they need to rebuild and relocate their lives. Many evacuees are without permanent housing, stable jobs, or the resources necessary to fully rehabilitate themselves following the ordeals they experienced. These Israeli citizens need further assistance as they continue to rebuild their lives. The JCPA believes the global Jewish Community must remain committed to supporting these displaced and traumatized Israelis; Commends the assistance of the United Jewish Communities and other organizations and communities to these individuals. JCPA member organizations are encouraged to provide financial assistance and emotional support for the displaced former residents of Gaza and the northern Shomron who were evacuated from their homes; Raise awareness regarding the plight of the Gaza and northern Shomron evacuees and seek necessary support for them; Advocate in their meetings with Israeli government officials for the full compensation and rehabilitation of the Gaza and North Shomron evacuees, requesting in their discussions that the Government of Israel declare the housing, employment and social welfare of these Israeli citizens a national mission of appropriate priority. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

Israelis Attacked and Displaced by Lebanon War

More than a million Israelis were affected by the devastating attacks of Hezbollah rockets. The JCPA believes the global Jewish Community must remain committed to supporting these displaced and crisis-

wearry Israelis. JCPA member organizations are encouraged to provide financial assistance and emotional support for all the residents of the northern and southern communities affected by Hezbollah and Palestinian attacks; Raise awareness regarding the plight of the residents of Sderot and other affected southern towns and seek necessary support for them; Advocate in their meetings with Israeli government officials for economic support for affected southern towns, requesting in their discussions that the Government of Israel declare the housing, employment and social welfare of these Israeli citizens a national mission of appropriate priority. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

Israel's Security Fence

The General Assembly's entangling the ICJ in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to give an opinion on matters that should be determined through bilateral negotiations, is a dangerous politicization of international law for short-term public relations gain, with potentially grave repercussions for the integrity of international law and of the ICJ. The JCPA believes that consistent with the framework of Arab-Israel peace agreements, issues relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be settled through bilateral negotiations. Solutions should not be predetermined or imposed by the International Court of Justice or other international bodies; that the United Nations General Assembly resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the ICJ on Israel's security fence reflects a long campaign by Israel's detractors to manipulate and abuse the U.N. system to isolate and demonize the Jewish State. This anti-Israel environment in the U.N. serves to undermine constructive efforts to promote Israeli-Palestinian negotiations; that the ICJ involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has potentially dangerous repercussions for the integrity of the Court and international law. The community relations field should monitor the proceedings, educate the community, media and local officials about the anti-Israel bias implicit in the process, and make the case for Israel's security needs in the face of Palestinian unceasing terrorism; reach out to U.S. officials and to the legal community, urging them to speak out publicly with concerns about the politicization and misuse of the International Court of Justice and its repercussions for the integrity of international law; educate the community, local media and opinion molders on the misuse of international bodies such as the U.N. and the ICJ to single out and isolate Israel. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum.)

WORLD JEWRY

Anti-Semitism Related To Middle Eastern Tensions

The JCPA is greatly concerned by the spate of anti-Semitic incidents, which appear to be related to Israel-Palestinian tensions; urges government and community leaders to make it clear that they will not tolerate attacks against Jewish institutions and that disagreements over the situation in the Middle East, however passionate, must be expressed with civilized speech and behavior; calls on the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Jordan to live up to their commitments to eradicate anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement in the media and in the classroom, and begin to seriously educate their populations – children and adults – on Jews, Israel, tolerance and non-violence (Resolution adopted in October 2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001); and pledges to persevere both in its support for Middle East peace and Jewish-Muslim understanding here in America (Resolution adopted in October 2000).

Jews in the Former Soviet Union

The JCPA supports increased vigilance and advocacy by the organized Jewish community and the U.S. government with regard to anti-Semitism in the Former Soviet Union (FSU); efforts to promote the rule of law, as well as economic and democratic reforms in the FSU, in order to ensure a safe and productive environment for Jewish expression and aliyah agenda; programs that promote the safety and welfare of the Jewish community in the FSU (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001); encourages engagement in renewal of Jewish communal life through Kehilla projects, humanitarian assistance and other exchanges (Agenda 1998-1999); supports annual waivers of Jackson-Vanik legislation, which links trade benefits to

country's respect for right of its citizens to emigrate, for eleven out of twelve newly independent states of the FSU based on their current policies, and supports exemption of Russia from the annual review process itself (Agenda 1997-1998); encourage government and community leaders, academics, journalist in the successor states of the FSU to take public stands against anti-Semitism and racism generally, and to adopt and enforce laws against racial incitement; promote institutionalization of judicial, legislative and law enforcement reform which will help the FSU states make the transition to rule of law societies (JPP 1995-1996).

Ethiopian Jews

The JCPA supports a greater effort by the Israeli government and American Jewish community to meet absorption needs of the Ethiopian community in Israel; and expeditious and sensitive resolution of the Falash Mura issue (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001).

The JCPA urges the Israeli government to take all necessary measures, including intensive discussions with the Ethiopian government, to accelerate the movement to Israel of those Falash Mura near the Addis Ababa compound who are eligible for Israeli citizenship and to expedite pending investigations of the remaining Falash Mura; seeks to assure that the humanitarian needs of those Falash Mura found ineligible to go to Israel also are addressed in an appropriate manner, and explores with U.S. government officials, if appropriate, how this country might provide diplomatic and other assistance. (Resolution adopted in 1996)

Iranian Jews - Iran 10

The JCPA is extremely concerned by the fate of 10 Iranian Jews from the city of Shiraz unjustly convicted of spying for Israel; urges all people of good will, including religious, human rights, and political leaders to join with us in calling upon the Iranian Government immediately to release them; and urges all those with governmental and business ties to Iran to continue to press for their immediate and unconditional release (Resolution adopted in June 1999; Resolution adopted in February 2001).

Argentinean Jewry

The JCPA stands in solidarity with the Jewish community in Argentina; calls upon the Argentinean government to safeguard against future attacks on the Jewish community, including addressing the problem of extreme political forces in the country that promote or tolerate racial hatred and engage in acts of anti-Semitism (Resolution adopted in February 2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001); and urges development of cooperation among the various Argentine faith communities, including lay and religious leaders, as a means of enhancing security in the country. (Resolution adopted in February 2000).

The JCPA calls upon the Argentinean government to bring all the perpetrators of the heinous Israeli embassy and AMIA bombings before competent judicial tribunals; advocates for access at the AMIA trial to independent human rights organizations and NGOs in order to insure a transparent and fair proceeding and calls upon the international community to join in monitoring the trial; urges our member organizations to keep these issues at the forefront of the U.S and world attention until they have been resolved in a satisfactory manner; calls upon President George W. Bush and the members of the 107th Congress to use their good offices with the government of Argentina to do everything possible to bring the perpetrators of the two terrorist attacks to justice (Resolution adopted in February 2000; Resolution adopted in February 2001).

Jews in Central and Eastern Europe

For Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, new freedoms accompanying the democratization process are enabling revitalization of Jewish life...the specter of anti-Semitism, however, is reappearing in varying degrees...the JCPA supports democratically-oriented forces in Central and Eastern European countries;

monitoring of anti-Semitism there; deepening of relations between American Jewish community and Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe (JPP 1990-1991).

International Anti-Semitism

We urge government officials, as well as political and religious leaders to condemn anti-Semitism and to continue to make it clear that neither violent attacks against Jewish institutions, nor the rhetoric which immediately incites such attacks, will be tolerated. Furthermore, we hope that political and religious leaders will make it clear that disagreements over the situation in the Middle East, however passionate, must be expressed with appropriate behavior and in appropriate language. (Resolution adopted in February 2002). The JCPA believes the rise of anti-Semitism globally and particularly in Europe is a significant and serious problem, and one that is deeply troubling given the unique and tragic history of the Jews in that region. This problem has serious implications not only for the Jewish communities of Europe, but also for Israel and the worldwide Jewish community; it is important to become familiar and make contacts with key parties within the European political system; recent initiatives to fight anti-Semitism, including the upcoming OSCE conference and specific programs in France, are important and welcome. However, the success of these initiatives will require a sustained and serious commitment to combating anti-Semitism by these governments. The community relations field should monitor and expose developments and occurrences of anti-Semitism in Europe, including violence, vandalism, and expressions of anti-Semitic sentiment in the media and government; develop an effective media relations strategy by engaging in a long term, on-going dialogue with newspapers, radio and television stations raising awareness of the problem of anti-Semitism in Europe; encourage the U.S. Administration to continue using its global leadership position to impress upon world leaders the significance of anti-Semitism to the United States; educate local diplomats, media and the community on how incendiary rhetorical assaults on Israel help create a climate in which some individuals believe that their violent attacks against the Jewish community will be tolerated; encourage full investigation of incidents of anti-Semitism and surveys of anti-Semitic sentiment, and encourage accurate reporting of such incidents and surveys; work with non-Jewish and interfaith leadership to increase their understanding of the frequent linkages between anti-Israel rhetoric and anti-Semitism; urge that existing European hate-crime and anti-discrimination laws be enforced to the fullest extent of the law; and urge those countries that do not have such laws to enact and vigorously enforce them; build bridges to Jewish and non-Jewish groups in Europe to dispel misperceptions and improve relations. (Adopted at the 2004 Plenum.)

International Religious Freedom

The JCPA is committed to protecting religious freedom by raising awareness about and speaking out against religious persecution wherever it exists. The JCPA resolves to call upon the governments of the world to end all persecution on the basis of religious beliefs or practices; ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and abide by the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and hold themselves and other governments to commitments arising from their ratification of international agreements as they apply to religious freedoms; without the creation of exceptions; call upon the United States government to support religious freedom around the world and take appropriate action when there are violations of religious freedom; and call upon the United States government to implement the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, including but not limited to engaging in high-level dialogue with foreign governments aimed at addressing religious persecution; facilitating reform in countries that restrict religious freedom by providing training for lawyers, lawmakers, and judges; encouraging other governments to ratify agreements to uphold religious freedom and other human rights, and holding participating governments to commitments made by their ratification of international agreements; placing sanctions on foreign governments when ongoing systemic persecution persists; enhancing the training of foreign service officers and U.S. Administration and legislative officials about the role of religion in the world's varied societies and the problems of religious persecution; and supporting and cooperating with organizations and coalitions working for religious

freedom, and providing humanitarian and legal support to victims of religious persecution.(Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum).

Venezuelan Jewry

The presence of terrorist cells in Venezuela, in addition to the sympathy of the Chavez government to suspected Arab and Muslim terrorists, should raise serious questions as to whether Venezuela could become a likely target for another terrorist attack against Israeli or Jewish institutions in Latin America or even the United States due to its geographical proximity to this country. The JCPA recommends the organized American Jewish community, the State of Israel and the United States government should monitor developments in Venezuela much more closely, especially as they affect the security and well being of the Jewish community in that country. In addition, the Chavez government should be made aware that providing support and safe haven to terrorists will not be tolerated. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum.)

Jews from Arab Countries

In 1948 an estimated 940,000 Jews called the Arab world home; today only an estimated 8-12,000 Jews remain in the entire Arab world in ever dwindling numbers. Since 1947, over 681 UN General Assembly resolutions have been passed on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Of these, 101 exclusively deal with Palestinian refugees. Not one UN resolution has been passed that deals exclusively with the Jewish refugees from Arab states, and their just rights. A recognition of the past is essential to the integrity of the Middle East peace process.

The community relations field should tell the story of Jewish refugees from Arab states. The world must know about the plight of Jews from Arab states as former refugees. The Jews from Arab states were victims of mass violations of human rights, and justice calls for their story to be told, and their rights addressed. Reestablish historical context by returning the story of Jewish refugees from Arab states to the narrative of the modern Middle East. Help bring about a just solution to the Middle East crisis. Seek international recognition by demanding that the United Nations address the grievances and injustices to the displaced former Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and acknowledge the centuries-old, vibrant Jewish life that has been expunged from the history of the Middle East.

The JCPA reaffirms its support for the initiative “*Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC)*” and recalls its commitment to provide the Jewish community relations field with periodic updates regarding its progress. Further, the JCPA supports local efforts that work at the grassroots level to bring this issue to the public’s attention. The community relations field should support an internal registry campaign to assist in the collection of testimonials and the compilation of records in order to preserve the historical narrative as well as to document the physical and material losses suffered by Jews displaced from Arab countries. Document the legal bases, in international law and jurisprudence, for pursuing rights and redress for the losses suffered by Jews displaced from Arab countries. The community relations field should raise the issue of Jews displaced from Arab countries in professional or legal associations, with relevant governments and international bodies, and in meetings with officials of municipal, state and federal or international entities. Mobilize Jewish communal support and action in support of the rights of Jews from Arab countries including lectures, media relations, and educational efforts, among others. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum)

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Support of United Nations

The JCPA supports full payment of United States dues to the United Nations (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001) While not perfect, the UN continues to offer the best forum for discussing global issues. (Resolution adopted in 1997)

Terrorism, Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction

The JCPA supports vigorous United States and international efforts to restrain Iran, Iraq, and other rogue states and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and delivery capability; and prevention of nuclear arms races in volatile areas of the world (Agenda 2000-2001); urges the U.S. to place a high priority on developing and enforcing more stringent international controls on the sale and transfer of advanced weapons and technology (Agenda 1997-1998). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it the U.S.-U.S.S.R. superpower rivalry, the JCPA urges the U.S. government to pursue a world-wide ban on nuclear testing...encourages the international community to address the problem of both legal and illegal trade of nuclear and other non-conventional weapons, including the safe disposal and/or control of nuclear material. (JPP 1996-1997)

(Dissent: The Jewish War Veterans considers the call for a world-wide ban on nuclear arms testing misconceived and dangerous. Until all nations are fully divested of their nuclear arsenals and the ability to create them, such talk of a ban on nuclear weapons testing is premature.)

The JCPA supported legislation that includes economic sanctions on both companies and countries engaged in the production and use of chemical and biological weapons (JPP 1992-1993); supports the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) that imposes sanctions for investment by foreign companies in Iran's petroleum sector; and the Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1997 that impose sanctions against companies violating U.S. legal prohibitions against transfer of missile technology to Iran (Agenda 1998-1999).

We call on other nations to applaud the freezing of assets of groups and individuals that have been linked to terrorist activities, as well as moves by major corporations and philanthropies who have blocked donations to such organizations (Resolution Adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

Austria

The JCPA condemns the inclusion of the Freedom Party in the new Austrian government; supports efforts by the United States, the EU nations, the State of Israel and the Austrian Jewish community to hold accountable the new government in Vienna; and urges the Austrian government to engage in a full examination of its role and responsibility with regards to the Holocaust (Resolution adopted in February 2000).

Germany

The neo-Nazi threat in Germany demands vigorous response by German authorities, supported by allies in the west (JPP 1994-1995); stronger steps need to be taken to protect the rights of minorities and to counter extremist movements in Germany; call on federal and state officials in Germany to work with civic education organizations and the school systems in the eastern states to develop prejudice reduction programs, including study of the Holocaust (Resolution adopted in 1992); calls upon the government of the unified Germany and its people to take steps that the following areas will be codified in law and institutionalized: institutionalization of memory of the Holocaust; systematic educational approach to the Holocaust; special relationship with Israel; compensation to Jewish people for crimes of the Holocaust; renewed attention to prosecution of Nazi war criminals; unified Germany based on principles of democratic pluralism and Germany's position in the world (Statement adopted in June 1990).

Africa

The JCPA emphasizes the need for greater attention to the African continent; advocates for humanitarian assistance to and humanitarian intervention in African countries during times of crisis; calls upon the Secretary General of the United Nations, the President of the United States, all world leaders, and members of the 107th Congress, to condemn acts of violence against innocent populations as well as the horror of slavery; reaffirms our commitment to basic international human rights, including, but-not limited to- political organization, free assembly, free speech, health care, family planning and reproductive freedom, education, a healthy environment, women's rights and core labor rights, and the elimination of hunger, poverty and discrimination; advocates for a variety of increased economic development initiatives for Africa, including trade priorities, debt relief where appropriate, micro enterprises, training and business programs (including those for women), which serve as catalysts for sustained growth and equitable development while protecting the environment; advocates for expansion of government funds for African development, including the U.S. Development Fund for Africa and the U.S. Agency for International Development, to meet the pressing needs of civil society, such as measures to prevent the spread of HIV and sleeping sickness disease, develop treatments for AIDS, and eliminate hunger; reaffirms our dedication to combat global poverty and hunger by recognizing the priority of policies that focus on poor countries; and commends the State of Israel for its support of economic and social development and humanitarian and medical assistance in Africa, and urges recognition of Israel's positive role by governments and the media. (Resolution adopted in February 2001). The JCPA resolves to commend those governments, international organizations, and private foundations that have taken the lead in combating the global AIDS pandemic and call upon the United States government and governments and non-governmental organizations around the world to commit to funding a need-based response to the global AIDS pandemic; call on the United States to contribute an amount commensurate to its relative wealth, as measured by the World Bank, to the global effort to combat AIDS, TB, and Malaria, without restrictions which limit options for treatment and prevention programs; support efforts to combat the global AIDS pandemic that integrate comprehensive, science-based prevention strategies, especially the search for effective, low cost and universally available vaccines; access to life-saving medications; and universal AIDS related education; support efforts to combat the global AIDS pandemic that incorporate a comprehensive response to the growing orphan crisis, including universal access to education, housing, health care, and other social services; urge U.S. bilateral aid and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, which is already coordinating much of the global response to the AIDS crisis; support U.S. trade policies that ensure access to affordable generic drugs for all developing countries; and support the use of the United States government's influence as the largest donor to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to negotiate debt cancellation for all poor countries facing AIDS crises in exchange for that country's investment in AIDS education, prevention and treatment. (Resolution adopted February 2004.)

Foreign Aid (General)

The JCPA will continue to educate the Jewish community and the public in general about the importance of foreign aid and its moral, political and strategic value in sub-Saharan Africa, the former Soviet Union and throughout the world (JPP 1996-1997); take the lead in forming alliances with religious, ethnic, environmental, humanitarian and other groups concerned with U.S foreign assistance, with the goal of building wider support for an increase over time in the total funds appropriated for foreign aid (JPP 1994-1995); work for appropriate increases in the overall foreign aid budget that enable the U.S. to fully meet its responsibilities, particularly with regard to emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and Central America, and humanitarian needs in sub-Saharan Africa (JPP 1990-1991).

Boycotts

The JCPA believes the use of politically motivated boycotts and other economic measures by the organized Jewish community may not be an effective long-term strategy and may be counter productive

to Jewish interests, except in those circumstances where, upon careful consideration of all the facts and circumstances including the legal implications, there remains convincing evidence of inappropriate conduct, and where dialogue and other forms of response have failed and there remains a reasonable chance of reaching the desired result

The community relations field should encourage full investigation of claims of inappropriate conduct, quickly dispel those which are based on false premises, and utilize traditional community relations practices -- such as dialogue, coalition-building and advocacy – to achieve the desired results, develop an effective media relations strategy by engaging in a long term, on-going dialogue with newspapers, radio and television stations. Such a strategy, applied consistently, will yield better and more permanent results than would flow from a boycott. JCRCs must be diligent and honest critics, pointing out factual errors, flagging inflammatory language, noting inconsistencies, writing letters, and contacting the media outlet's ombudsman as often as necessary, and encourage the U.S. Administration to use its global leadership position to discourage boycotts of Israel by other countries, academic and scientific institutions in the U.S. and around the world. (Resolution adopted at the Plenum).

Iran

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran's leaders have viewed the United States and Israel as enemies and have provided extensive financing, training and overall support to terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, Hamas, Al Qaeda, and Islamic Jihad. For many years, Iran has been developing nuclear projects, raising the fear that these could be converted into weapons of mass destruction.

The JCPA believes that efforts to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power should be a high priority of the United States and the international community; Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons should be condemned; Iran must abide by its commitment to grant IAEA inspectors full, unrestricted access and cooperate fully with the investigation of Iranian nuclear activities.

The community relations field should encourage the Bush administration to continue to address the challenge posed by Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons capability, and communicate concern about this issue to members of Congress as well as representatives of foreign nations (particularly Russia and the European Union) and to the United Nations; and, Work with Jewish and appropriate non-Jewish coalition partners to raise awareness about this issue, continue to monitor the situation and provide guidance as needed. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

In the last two years, the Iranian regime, under the leadership of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has manifested increasingly threatening behavior and rhetoric toward the United States, other Western powers, Israel and the Jewish people. President Ahmadinejad repeatedly has called for Israel to be wiped off the map.

A number of Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, have also warned that Iran's development of nuclear weapons poses a threat to Middle East stability and could provoke nuclear arms proliferation throughout the region. Meanwhile, the Teheran regime has defied the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations in their attempts to monitor Iran's nuclear program, and, as a result, the UN Security Council to date has imposed on Iran escalating sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

The JCPA believes that the threat of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons is a matter of the gravest concern and utmost urgency to the world. Therefore, the Jewish community relations field is urged immediately to independently and together with political, civic and religious partners in the general community, advocate that the United States, the leadership of the United Nations, particularly the permanent members of the

UN Security Council, as well as other relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions, utilize all diplomatic and economic measures necessary to deter Iran from continuing its quest for nuclear weapons, while respecting the humanitarian needs of the Iranian people. Economic measures after appropriate consideration should include, for example, sanctions, targeted divestment (particularly direct divestment), and bank transfer restrictions aimed at the Teheran regime. (Resolution adopted by JCPA Board of Directors on March 27, 2007)

Dependence on Foreign Energy Sources

America's increasing dependence on foreign oil for transportation, electricity, industry and other uses poses great risks for our nation and the world, specifically threats to national security, economic stability, and the health of our environment. In particular, our dependence on foreign oil enriches some countries that are hostile to the United States and support terrorism. America's growing energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil and other fossil fuels requires prompt action and the Jewish Council of Public Affairs calls upon our government to make this issue a top national priority.

In order to achieve a substantial reduction in US dependence on imported energy sources, America must initiate a national campaign that employs creativity, collaboration, and commitment to develop a comprehensive energy plan that effectively addresses our dependence on foreign oil while taking into account the environmental, economic and other domestic needed changes.

The JCPA calls on Congress and the Administration to expeditiously address the urgent need to reduce the United States' dependence on foreign oil by developing and implementing a comprehensive, environmentally sound energy plan. The JCPA believes such a multifaceted approach should include: Supporting the modernization and expansion of America's energy infrastructure with sensitivity to our natural environment; Dramatically increasing energy efficiency and conservation; Rapidly developing, producing, and marketing renewable and alternative energy technologies; Developing and implementing environmentally responsible options to increase overall domestic energy production; Collaborate with international partners to develop global solutions; Diversifying foreign energy sources to reduce our reliance on hostile regimes; Expanding cost-efficient, energy-efficient alternatives to ensure that conservation is a viable option for all Americans; Improving mass transit options to reduce the consumption of oil by American vehicles; Supporting changes in urban and suburban communities that facilitate effective use of modes of transportation that do not consume external energy, such as cycling and walking; Offering economic and other incentives to purchase more fuel-efficient or alternatively-fueled vehicles and to rely upon public transportation; Mandating significant enhancements in fuel economy standards for all modes of transportation and improving mass transit options; Increasing public awareness through broad education campaigns; Exploring the use of nuclear energy with appropriate safeguards. (Resolution adopted by the 2007 Plenum)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS (GENERAL)

International Human Rights

The JCPA supports the vigorous protection of human rights as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy, and urges effective American involvement in this area, on a multilateral basis when possible and a unilateral basis when necessary. (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001)

The JCPA believes that each human rights situation should be examined separately, with a view toward developing an approach that has the greatest chance of achieving the desired result. (Agenda 1998-1999)

Since 1950, China has engaged in the systematic persecution of the Tibetan people through imprisonment, torture, rape and the execution of supporters of the Dalai Lama. In East Timor, the Indonesian occupation forces have murdered a significant portion of the civilian population and tortured many others. Thousands of innocent civilians have been slaughtered during the recent unrest in Algeria. Genocidal conflicts continue to take a terrible toll in Central Africa. The JCPA appeals to the Administration and to the UN to develop effective responses to these and other humanitarian crises. (Agenda 1998-1999)

International Criminal Court

The JCPA supports refinements in the International Criminal Court that may enable Israel and the U.S. to join the tribunal (Agenda 1999-2000; Agenda 2000-2001).

The JCPA supports the initiative to establish a permanent and effective International Criminal Court, and urges the U.S. to take the lead in this effort...It views the establishment of a permanent judicial forum with appropriate safeguards to avoid politicizing the process as an important step forward in securing international human rights. (Resolution adopted in 1998)

Kosovo

The JCPA welcomes the agreement approved by the United Nations Security Council, which calls for the removal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and the safe return of ethnic Albanian refugees to their homes; applauds the NATO alliance for standing up against the policy of "ethnic cleansing" perpetrated by Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milocevic; urges Russia to play a constructive role in the post-war period; appeals to the international community to undertake the massive effort that will be needed to reconstruct the communities and lives of the more than one million Kosovar refugees; and calls on NATO to pursue the arrest and prosecution of those Serb political and military leaders, particularly Slobodan Milocevic, who are indicted by the international war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Resolution adopted in June 1999).

The JCPA supports the effort by NATO to stop "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo (Agenda 1999-2000); and the arrest and prosecution of individuals indicted by the war crimes tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (Agenda 2000-2001).

Bosnia

From the very beginning of the conflict ...the JCPA called for strong U.S. leadership in ending the tragedy in Bosnia. We continue to support U.S. efforts in the region. The JCPA calls for full cooperation by NATO forces and all parties to the conflict with the War Crimes Tribunal. Such cooperation should include at a minimum reasonable efforts to assure the effective gathering of evidence against, as well as the prosecution of, those alleged to be guilty of war crimes. (JPP 1996-1997)

In response to indiscriminate infliction of civilian casualties and "ethnic cleansing," the U.S. should not exclude the option of tactical and strategic bombing...The sanctions against Serbia should be maintained as long as aggression by Serbians in Bosnia continues...The U.S. should ensure that any new negotiations provide for a just peace and preservation of a democratic, viable, multi-ethnic Bosnia. (Resolution adopted in 1995)

Persecution of Religious Minorities

The 105th Congress enacted the International Religious Freedom Act, which promises to be an important tool in efforts to address human rights violations around the world. The law establishes a special unit within the State Department to deal with the persecution of religious minorities and sets forth a variety of sanctions the U.S. can employ against countries that engage in such activity. (Agenda 1999-2000)

Rwanda

The JCPA supports the arrest and prosecution of individuals indicted by the war crimes tribunals for Rwanda (Agenda 2000-2001).

Tibet

The JCPA insists that China desist in its efforts to smother Tibetan culture and restore the rights of that people to their distinct culture, religion, and way of life (JPP 1994-1995); encourages formation of coalitions whenever possible to request that the U.S. place the issue of Tibet and protection of religious freedom on the agenda of discussion between the U.S. and China; raise the Tibet issue at appropriate international fora; and encourage Americans to meet with the Dalai lama and other Tibetan leaders. (Resolution adopted in 1990)

Europe

Together with allies in Europe, develop programs to end the xenophobia and discrimination directed at guest workers and other. (JPP 1994-1995)

Somalia

In Somalia, civil war has exacerbated a natural disaster of famine that is threatening the entire population of the African nation. The JCPA encourages the Administration, working within the UN framework, to provide and ensure the effective delivery of food, medicine, and other humanitarian relief supplies to Somalia. (JPP 1993-1994)

Haitian Refugees

Another area on the international human rights agenda that is a priority concerns refugees seeking asylum in the U.S. Of particular importance is the plight of the Haitians who struggle to find refuge in the U.S. (JPP 1993-1994)

Kurds

American Jews have been profoundly concerned about the systematic repression of the Kurdish population in Iraq, a people who have been subjected to oppression by a number of countries for most of this century and welcome the Bush administration's humanitarian assistance for the Kurds (JPP 1991-1992).

Advancing Women's Rights

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) urges the United States to ratify the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a landmark Convention that has been ratified by 168 countries, including Israel. (Resolution Adopted at the 2002 Plenum).

International Family Planning

The imposition of the global gag rule compounds the rising threat to women and families. It forbids US family planning assistance to organizations that use funding from any other source to perform abortions in cases other than rape, incest, or a threat to the life of the woman; provide counseling and referral for abortion; or lobby their own governments to legalize abortion or make it safer and more accessible. When women's access to contraceptive services following abortion are limited, efforts to prevent repeat abortions are impeded. Additionally, some family planning groups have already shown reluctance to treat clients following life-threatening septic and spontaneous abortions, fearing that association with any abortion - even to save a woman's life - would jeopardize their US funding. Additionally, the global gag rule restricts open communication between women and their trusted health care providers. Prohibiting counseling and/or referrals on abortion makes it impossible for providers to offer the comprehensive health care needed or requested by their clients. Therefore, the JCPA believe that the US government

should support comprehensive international family planning programs. The Administration should restore the \$34 million in funds to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) approved by Congress; repeal the Global Gag Rule; appropriate \$5.4 billion to fight global AIDS, TB, and malaria in fiscal year 2005, but not at the expense of other critical development initiatives. The community relations field should urge Congress and the Administration to fully fund comprehensive family planning programs; urge Congress to oppose efforts to restrict the services, information and education international family planning programs provide in developing countries; educate the public on the ways in which international family planning programs positively influence the health of women, their families, developing countries and the environment; educate the public on the negative effects of restricting funds for international family planning programs. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum.)

Stopping the Genocide in Sudan

JCPA and its member agencies should: Call upon all world leaders and the United Nations to condemn the Sudanese government's acts of violence and genocide against innocent civilians; Press the international community to demand that the Sudanese Government and rebel forces honor their existing agreements, particularly provisions to immediately cease all violence and attacks, refrain from forcible relocation of civilians, ensure that humanitarian relief reaches all those in need; and cooperate with human rights monitoring efforts; Press the international community to advocate for increased capacity of the African Union in Darfur and giving them a clear mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to protect civilians and enforce the ceasefire; encourage countries to provide the Union with the required equipment, logistical, financial, material and other necessary resources, assume its responsibility to protect innocent civilians through the UN or other multi-national forces by any means including military intervention if necessary, impose an arms embargo with a mechanism for monitoring and enforcement on the Government of Sudan and rebel forces if they do not cease all violence, impose targeted sanctions on the Sudanese government and its business interests as a means of pressuring the government to end the genocide, support NATO enforcement of a no-fly zone over the Darfur region, pressure the Sudanese government to establish the conditions necessary to permit the voluntary, safe and dignified return of those displaced by the conflict, expand the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to coordinate services for internally displaced people in Darfur, and, hold accountable those responsible for these atrocities; Encourage worldwide governmental and non-governmental humanitarian assistance to meet the humanitarian need in that region; Help in relief efforts by supporting organizations giving aid, particularly noting the work of the Jewish community in such efforts; Call upon the Sudanese government and the international community to reconstruct homes and villages and return the refugees to their land after the region is secure; Demand that U.S. elected officials and decision makers stay vigilant on this issue and take a pro-active role; Educate our constituencies about the crisis in Darfur; Locally and nationally, organize with other faith and communal organizations activities to raise awareness about this crisis. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

The JCPA is deeply concerned and outraged by the ongoing tragedy in Darfur. A targeted approach to divestment along with intensive diplomatic efforts would deprive the Sudanese government of resources in needs to continue its genocide and exert significant pressure on the government of Sudan to change its behavior.

Targeted divestment is the removal of investments in companies that are directly or indirectly helping the Sudanese government to perpetuate genocide. Since the ultimate intent of Sudan divestment is to protect the victims of genocide, it is important to tailor divestment to have maximal impact on the government of Sudan's behavior and minimal harm to innocent Sudanese (and to the financial health of institutional portfolios in the US). Divestment should therefore be targeted to those companies that have a business relationship with the government or a government-created project, impart minimal benefit to the country's underprivileged, and have implemented no significant corporate governance policy regarding the Darfur

situation. Such targeted divestment implicitly excludes companies involved in agriculture, production and distribution of consumer goods, or engaged solely in the provision of goods and services intended to relieve human suffering or to promote welfare, health, religious and spiritual activities, and education.

Withdrawal of business investments from Sudan would simultaneously create an economic penalty for genocide and reduce the Sudanese government's ability to fund the campaign. Therefore, the JCPA calls on communities to support the campaign calling for a targeted divestment in Sudan as led by the Sudan Divestment Task Force, which has identified the companies that will be targeted. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

International Debt Cancellation

The Jewish Council of Public Affairs resolves to commend the United States government for its leadership in calling for 100% debt cancellation for poor countries; Call on the G8 to continue negotiations concerning debt cancellation until such an agreement is reached on 100% cancellation of debt owed by poor countries to lender nations, the IMF, World Bank and regional development banks; Support efforts to cancel 100% of the debts owed by countries with accountable and responsible governments, burdened with high levels of human need and environmental distress, which are unable to meet the basic needs of their people or achieve a level of sustainable development that ensures a decent quality of life; Oppose imposing conditions on countries in exchange for debt cancellation that have the effect of deepening poverty or degrading the environment, such as requiring user fees for health care or education, or the implementation of unsustainable farming practices; Support Debt cancellation that includes provisions to assure both transparency and accountability, so that resources reach the populations most in need, and that this program be used to promote human rights in the beneficiary countries. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Opposition to Torture

The JCPA opposes the use of torture and affirms the continued validity and legal definitions present in the Geneva Conventions and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Opposes the practice of 'extraordinary rendition', which is commonly defined as an extrajudicial procedure that sends criminal suspects to other countries, specifically to those that are suspected of using torture during interrogation; Supports allowing all people in U.S. custody subject to the Geneva Conventions the right to be visited by the International Committee of the Red Cross; Supports efforts to examine past practices and ensure that interrogations by military and intelligence agencies comport with international conventions; and, Urges the community relations field to work independently and in coalitions to advance the above. (Adopted at the 2006 Plenum)

Human Trafficking

The JCPA believes that the demand for and apparatus that facilitates the movement of modern-day slaves around the world must be eliminated; human trafficking is a crime that harms millions of victims worldwide; and that, the public should be alerted to the risks involved with it and work with the American government and United Nations to combat trafficking.

The JCPA and its member agencies should advocate for consistent and comprehensive state and federal anti-trafficking laws that provide for criminal penalties for traffickers as well as protection and rehabilitation for victims; support President Bush's decision to raise the issue of human trafficking in the United Nations and for leaders of the world to work together to end it; support the State Department's efforts to curtail the demand for human trafficking and to work extensively with governments on action plans for prevention of human trafficking; support the State Department's efforts with Tier 2 and Tier 3 countries, and any country that demonstrates immediate and obvious violations not recognized in the previous year's TIP report; encourage local and state law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies to

prosecute the traffickers and protect the victims; and, join in coalition with other groups offering advocacy and assistance to the victims of trafficking. (Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

JEWISH SECURITY AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY

American Government: Protecting Democratic Pluralism

The JCPA believes that the pluralistic fabric of our society demands respect for the religious and secular views of all segments of our society, including those with strongly held religious views. The religion or lack thereof of an individual should never be a factor in a person's qualifications for elective or appointive office. Vigorous advocacy in support of democratic pluralistic principles is in the best interest of the American tradition and should in no way denigrate the value of any voice, religious or otherwise. Individual freedoms and safeguards from discrimination and proselytization should never be diluted or traded for support on other matters of conviction or concern. Individuals have the right to freedom from unwarranted government intrusion into matters of personal religious conviction and a right to seek equal protection, including through the judiciary. The pluralistic fabric of our society demands that individuals, especially those acting in an official public capacity, never impose personal religious views on others;

The community relations field should educate about the importance of democratic pluralism, the American system of checks and balances, and the importance of protecting Constitutional freedoms; Work independently and in coalitions to protect pluralism, the independence of the judiciary, and the scientific process; and work independently and in coalitions to ensure that government bodies and legislation continue to protect individual religious beliefs without preferential treatment for any one religious perspective. (adopted 2006 Plenum).

Campaign Finance Reform

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) welcomes Congressional consideration of options for campaign finance reform, including the most prominent of the recent legislative proposals, the McCain-Feingold Bill, which would ban soft money, make the airwaves more accessible to candidates and end or limit other abuses, to be consistent with the First Amendment.

Without endorsing any particular legislative formulation, the JCPA urges an open debate of the issues involved, to enable our community and the nation to evaluate appropriate measures for reform that will strengthen our democratic process. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum)

Court Stripping

Members of Congress have periodically sought to remove jurisdiction and discretion from the federal courts after unpopular rulings on issues such as school desegregation, the draft, Miranda warnings, school prayer, and abortion. This trend towards attempting to strip the federal courts of jurisdiction has continued with the introduction of legislations that would deny the federal judiciary the right to rule on the constitutionality of certain laws

The JCPA believes that court stripping proposals, if enacted, would create dangerous precedents in the areas of equal protection, separation of powers, and due process. The principle of judicial review has been fundamental to the separation of powers since *Marbury v. Madison*, which recognized the necessity for judicial protection of citizens from legislative and executive overreaching. Our system of government, with its checks and balances, depends upon an independent judiciary to ensure that all legislation complies with the values in the Constitution.

The community relations field should educate the public on the negative effects of court stripping proposals; and, Oppose legislation to diminish the separation of powers through court-stripping measures. (Resolution adopted at the 2005 Plenum)

Gun Safety, Crime, and Violence

The JCPA believes that the easy access of firearms and its accompanying violence has taken a terrible toll on America, particularly on its youth. The JCPA and its member agencies support local, state, and federal legislation that does the following: requires background checks for all gun purchases, particularly purchases at gun shows nationwide, and a mandatory 72-hour waiting period for handgun purchases; requires mandatory training programs and licensing for gun owners and registration of handguns; limits purchases to one handgun a month; imposes new penalties on those selling guns to juveniles; penalizes negligent gun owners if their guns are used in violent acts, especially by children; requires the expansion of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban; requires additional resources be allocated and efforts be made to prosecute those who attempt either to sell or to obtain firearms by fraudulent means; requires the sale of effective childproof safety locks with clear instructions on use on all handgun purchases.

We believe that current laws must be enforced and that new common-sense legislation is needed to stem the rising tide of gun violence throughout the United States. The JCPA and its member agencies call on all legislators to make this country safer by stemming the tide of violence that puts us all at risk. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

The JCPA supports strong federal, state and local measures to control and reduce the manufacture, sale and possession of handguns and other non-sporting firearms and ammunition, including stricter, enforced regulation of gun dealers; expansion of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban; appropriate waiting periods to permit background checks; training and licensing of gun owners; registration of handguns; limiting handgun purchases; requiring the sale of childproof safety locks with all handgun purchases; penalties for those selling guns to juveniles; penalizing negligent gun owners if their guns are used in violent acts, especially by children; improved regulation of interstate sales of weapons; improved prosecution of those who sell or obtain firearms illegally; and community efforts to reduce the quantity of guns and ammunition on the streets. The JCPA will continue to oppose legislative "anti-violence, pro-values" initiatives, which contribute little to violence reduction and further erode church-state separation. (Agenda 2000-2001)

The Jewish community relations field has a long standing concern with issues of quality of life and public safety. It is out of this concern, as well as the belief that Jewish tradition compels us to uphold the sanctity of life and the commandment against murder, that the JCPA has supported a wide range of legislative efforts designed to limit unfettered access to firearms such as the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, commonly referred to as the Assault Weapons Ban.

We are heartened by proposals under consideration that include, but are not limited to, restricting access to handguns by limiting purchase to one-per-month, authorizing the Attorney General to regulate handguns, requiring handguns to be ballistic fingerprinted prior to sale, making gun owners accountable for leaving guns accessible to children, allowing cities to have the authority to hold gun makers legally liable, limiting assault weapons and magazines, requiring state police to perform background checks in addition to federal NICS checks, limiting concealed weapons, and requiring locking devices.

The Jewish community relations field should raise awareness within the Jewish and general community regarding the nature and scope of the gun violence crisis in America and encourage more active advocacy on this issue; Make common cause with those governmental officials, law enforcement professionals,

health care providers and gun violence prevention activists who are advocating for reasonable and effective legislation that will appropriately limit access to handguns especially as it relates to the unlimited purchase of handguns; and Advocate for funding to address comprehensive, efficient, coordinated solutions to gun violence. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

Judicial Nominees

The JCPA believes it is essential that nominees to the federal bench receive proper scrutiny by the Senate, and that only those committed to protecting justice for all, as set forth in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, be confirmed.

It is not only Supreme Court Justices that matter. For most cases, the final word is decided by the US Circuit Courts of Appeal. These 12 circuits covering different areas of the county each have several judges, who, as the final arbiters in the overwhelming majority of appeals, are as important as Supreme Court justices. We urge that vacancies be filled as expeditiously as the full, fair, and prompt evaluation of a judicial nominee will permit. These nominees for lifetime appointments to the federal bench must be evaluated very carefully. Confirmation should only come after adequate hearings and examination of a full record. The Senate and its Judiciary Committee must assess each nominee's qualifications for the job. The Senate should also consider a nominee's experience, judicial temperament, judicial bias, writings and opinions, and public record on and off the bench and reject the nominee if that review raises serious and legitimate concerns that she or he will not follow and protect the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. (Resolution adopted at the 2002 Plenum).

Military

The JCPA believes that the pluralistic fabric of our society demands that officers and senior enlisted personnel in the military, including those working and studying at military academies, do not proselytize within the chain of command or otherwise seek to impose personal religious views on others.

The community relations field should closely track the implementation of the Air Force interim religious guidelines to ensure: Increased awareness and respect for cultural and religious differences; Adequate safeguards against coercive proselytizing and improper sectarian prayer at mandatory and official ceremonies and events; Notice about rights, responsibilities, and limitations under the guidelines; Training for chaplains, officers, and cadets toward the establishment of a climate of mutual respect and acceptance of differences in worship and faith traditions; and to ensure, A secure grievance procedure and appropriate remedies to violations of the guidelines. (adopted 2006 Plenum).

Non-Profit Sector

The JCPA believes further restrictions on the advocacy role of charitable nonprofits are unnecessary and would harm the important advocacy role that nonprofits play. Existing restrictions under Section 501(c) of the IRS code allow for adequate oversight of tax exempt organizations ensuring that such activities do not extend beyond the "substantial amount" limit in current law; Additional limitations on donor-advised funds, such as increased administrative or financial requirements, or a limitation on "board-size" or governance structure, are not necessary; and that the tax code should be modified to allow more Americans to benefit from incentives for charitable contributions including deductions for non-itemizers, to remove disincentives arising from the application of the alternative minimum tax, and to add provisions to allow an individual to make donations that are not subject to income tax directly from their individual retirement accounts to a charity. (adopted 2006 Plenum).

Religion and Politics

It is legitimate and indeed desirable for religious groups and clergy to advocate policies that would shape society in ways that those faith communities view as fulfilling their ideal of the “good society.” We believe that all issues may be put on the table for discussion in the marketplace of ideas, but the manner of advocacy should respect our tradition of church-state separation, free of any hint of coercion or verbal violence. In the debate of public policy issues, it is desirable that the focus be on the public good.

When church and synagogue officials command that their adherents who hold public office act in accordance with religious teachings inconsistent with responsibilities imposed by law, they threaten the very existence of a democracy whose citizens belong to a wide variety of faiths, or none. Such conduct goes well beyond the legitimate exercise of public advocacy. And while churches and synagogues have the right to judge whether their members’ conduct meets the demand of the faith, the exercise of that right against public officials for actions taken in furtherance of their official duties is highly divisive.

The Jewish community relations field should assert vigorously our profound belief that there are issues that must be beyond the reach of government. The separation of religious dogma from politics is incumbent upon not only religious groups and their spokesmen, but also upon public officials, candidates for public office, and political parties. They too, are called upon to avoid entangling the religious and political mainstreams of American life. (Joint Plenum Plan, 1985)

Rule of Law

The JCPA believes that: Elected and appointed governmental officials should comply with court decisions which declare rights under the Constitution or which seek to enforce such rights, regardless of such official’s religious or personal beliefs or they should resign or rescue themselves from the particular matter in question; The failure of elected and appointed governmental officials to comply with such court decisions weakens the institution of the judiciary in the eyes of the public and, thereby, the public’s belief in the rule of law in this country; The failure of elected and appointed governmental officials to comply with such court decisions gives aid and comfort to those groups who believe that they need not abide by the authority of the judicial system in this country; Congress should not abet or exacerbate such sentiments by prohibiting or interfering with enforcement of judicial decisions which declare rights under the Constitution or laws enacted by the United States Congress or which seek to compel compliance with rights declared under the Constitution or by laws enacted by the United States Congress.

The community relations field should: Educate about the importance of the rule of law as cornerstones of our democratic and pluralistic society; Work in coalition with other civil liberties and religious groups to explore and implement strategies that will protect the rule of law; Continue respectful dialogue with those in the Jewish community and the non-Jewish community who hold views that differ with the consensus positions of the Jewish community on issues such as civil rights or church state separation; Oppose legislative efforts that would weaken the rule of law by interfering with enforcement of judicial orders including pending federal legislation that would prohibit the expenditure of federal funds to enforce the decision of the federal court in the Alabama Ten Commandments case. (Resolution adopted at 2004 Plenum)

Science and Politics

The JCPA believes that science and medicine must remain independent from religious, political and ideological interference including the funding and conduct of research, appointments to governmental advisory boards, the relationship between patient and health care provider, and the availability of legal health services and medications.

The community relations field should work independently and in coalitions to protect pluralism, the independence of the judiciary, and the scientific process; Work independently and in coalitions to ensure that government bodies and legislation continue to protect individual religious beliefs without preferential treatment for any one religious perspective. (adopted 2006 Plenum).

Term Limits

The JCPA opposes term limits as an infringement on the rights of citizens to elect officials of their choice. This position applies to elected officials at the national, state, and local levels. (JPP 1995-1996)

Voting Rights and Equal Protection

The Voting Rights Act is considered one of the most effective civil rights laws in our nation's history. This legislation was designed to protect the political rights of minorities who had effectively been barred from voting. Nothing could be more threatening to the health of a representative society than to prohibit specific groups or factions from participating in the democratic process. The achievement of responsible government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, is only possible through citizen participation in the electoral process. Its extension is essential to our national progress toward economic and social justice. (Joint Program Plans of 1974-1975, 1975-1976, 1981-1982)

The JCPA believes that the Voting Rights Act should be extended without weakening amendments because it remains a vital tool in the protection of voting rights. (adopted at 2006 Plenum)

ANTI-SEMITISM AND HATE CRIMES

Anti-Semitism

The JCPA believes that anti-Semitic acts are still a fact of life in the United States. The community relations field will continue to monitor and respond appropriately to specific anti-Semitic incidents, and just as importantly, will continue to promote diversity training and education programs, especially in public schools and on college campuses. Such programs have proven to be effective tools for preventing discrimination and increasing tolerance and respect among different groups in American society.

The organized Jewish community also continues to monitor extremist groups that promote hatred against minority groups, including Jews, and, in some instances, foment hate-motivated violence. Armed militias, in particular, continue to pose a significant threat of violence. The JCPA believes the Internet is an especially attractive forum for extremists, because it is easily accessible, inexpensive, and not readily subject to regulation or editing. While the Jewish community is gravely concerned about this disturbing trend, hate on the Internet must be addressed in a manner that respects First Amendment free speech guarantees. The JCPA further believes that one promising response is the development of screening technology, which would provide parents with the ability to limit their children's access to messages of hate on the Internet. Such filters should be explored as they become more readily available.

The JCPA recognizes that anti-Semitism continues to be a problem on college campuses. University administrators frequently are mistaken regarding the extent to which the First Amendment compels them to allow virulently anti-Semitic views to be aired on campus, either by speakers or through publications and college newspaper advertisements. Of particular concern are the campus activities of Holocaust denier groups, which have targeted college populations to promote their ideology. The Jewish community relations field will continue to reach out to administrators, students, and newspaper editors, to educate them about anti-Semitism, including Holocaust revisionism, and anti-Zionism. (Agenda 1999-2000)

Anti-Semitism Related To Middle Eastern Tensions

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is greatly concerned about anti-Semitic incidents, which appear to be related to Israel-Palestinian tensions.

In future periods of tension and conflict, we urge government and community leaders to make it clear that they will not tolerate violent attacks against Jewish institutions. Furthermore, we hope that community leaders will make it clear that disagreements over the situation in the Middle East, however passionate, must be expressed with civilized speech and behavior.

Anti-Semitism in the Arab world has long been a concern to those in the Jewish community supportive of Arab-Israeli reconciliation. Clearly, when such anti-Jewish biases and prejudices are not addressed and corrected, these sentiments dangerously intensify during times of tension. We call on the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Jordan to live up to their commitments to eradicate anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement in the media and in the classroom, and begin to seriously educate their populations – children and adults – on Jews, Israel, tolerance and non-violence. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum)

We urge government officials, as well as political and religious leaders to condemn anti-Semitism and to continue to make it clear that neither violent attacks against Jewish institutions, nor the rhetoric which immediately incites such attacks, will be tolerated. Furthermore, we hope that political and religious leaders will make it clear that disagreements over the situation in the Middle East, however passionate, must be expressed with appropriate behavior and in appropriate language. (Resolution adopted in February 2002).

Boycotts

The JCPA believes the use of politically motivated boycotts and other economic measures by the organized Jewish community may not be an effective long-term strategy and may be counter productive to Jewish interests, except in those circumstances where, upon careful consideration of all the facts and circumstances including the legal implications, there remains convincing evidence of inappropriate conduct, and where dialogue and other forms of response have failed and there remains a reasonable chance of reaching the desired result

The community relations field should encourage full investigation of claims of inappropriate conduct, quickly dispel those which are based on false premises, and utilize traditional community relations practices -- such as dialogue, coalition-building and advocacy – to achieve the desired results, develop an effective media relations strategy by engaging in a long term, on-going dialogue with newspapers, radio and television stations. Such a strategy, applied consistently, will yield better and more permanent results than would flow from a boycott. JCRCs must be diligent and honest critics, pointing out factual errors, flagging inflammatory language, noting inconsistencies, writing letters, and contacting the media outlet's ombudsman as often as necessary, and encourage the U.S. Administration to use its global leadership position to discourage boycotts of Israel by other countries, academic and scientific institutions in the U.S. and around the world. (Resolution adopted in February 2003).

Hate Crimes - Combating Bias-motivated Hatred in America

The JCPA supports passage of hate crime laws in those states without them, and supports strengthening

1 laws in those states that now lack comprehensive laws.

The inclusion of any group in hate crime laws need not be viewed as an expression of support for that group, but rather as a recognition of the reality that certain segments of our society are subject to significantly greater incidences of hate crimes -- and that hate crimes legislation speaks to our collective

disdain for criminal behavior motivated by hatred towards groups or individuals because of their association with a group.

The vast majority of bias crimes are effectively addressed at the state and local level. However, in states without hate crime statutes, and in others with limited coverage, federal investigators and prosecutors must have authority to assist local prosecutions and become involved. Pending legislation, the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (LLEEA), would provide this expanded hate crime response authority. The JCPA reaffirms its support for the LLEEA and calls upon Members of Congress to enact this measure as a high priority.

The JCPA supports expanded participation in the FBI Hate Crime Statistics Act data collection effort - including better reporting by colleges and universities. In addition, JCPA supports efforts to empower victims of hate crime to report them to authorities.

There is growing awareness of the need to complement tough laws and more vigorous enforcement with education, awareness, and training initiatives designed to reduce bias-motivated violence - especially for youth. The JCPA supports expanded efforts to promote innovative anti-bias violence training and educational outreach for schools and the community.

Our civic leaders set the tone for national discourse and have an essential role in shaping attitudes. The JCPA encourages political, religious, and civic leaders to seek opportunities to speak out against expressions of bigotry, intolerance, and prejudice intended to intimidate or teach contempt for others in our society. (Resolution adopted by 2004 Plenum)

The JCPA will continue to promote a comprehensive approach to addressing anti-Semitism and other bias-motivated hatred in America, including passage and enforcement of strong hate crimes statutes at the federal and state levels, promotion of tougher gun control laws, and participation in broad multi-religious and multi-ethnic coalitions dedicated to strengthening the national will to prevent and combat hatred in all of its manifestations. The JCPA and its member agencies will also continue to play a leadership role in ensuring that the need for sound security protocols at Jewish institutions is balanced against the need to promote the openness and accessibility of those institutions for all who wish to use them. (Agenda 2000-2001)

The JCPA views with alarm the continuing scourge of hate crimes in American society. The JCPA supports passage of the hate crimes prevention act (HCPA), which would strengthen the federal government's ability to investigate and prosecute hate crimes and expand federal hate crimes law to include acts motivated by the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Additionally, the JCPA supports passage of appropriate hate crimes laws in the ten states that still do not have meaningful hate crimes statutes, and strengthening of laws in those states whose hate crimes statutes could be more comprehensive. Such legislation is necessary to send a strong message that crimes based on prejudice and hatred are anathema to the fundamental values of democracy upon which this nation is founded. Finally, the JCPA also supports efforts to encourage greater compliance with the federal hate crimes statistics act, which mandates data collection and reporting of hate crimes, and with other federal and state laws intended to combat hate crimes. (Agenda 1999-2000)

SEPARATION OF RELIGION AND STATE

Overview

The JCPA believes that in our increasingly pluralistic society, a clear division between religion and state remains the best way to preserve and promote religious rights and liberties for all Americans, including the Jewish community; Religious institutions and people of faith can and should play a vital role in public discourse. The separation of religion and state does not mandate silence from such individuals and institutions with respect to matters of public policy. However, attempts to influence public policy should be tempered by both respect and tolerance for diverse beliefs and practices, as well as the principle that government must treat all its citizens equally, regardless of religious belief or the lack thereof; The public policy agenda of the American Jewish community should be guided by what best serves our community's values and interests in the context of a democratic and pluralistic society. Even where an increased role of religion in the public square may be judicially interpreted as constitutional, we should continue to oppose changes which we consider detrimental to our core values, the interests of the Jewish community, or the pluralistic nature of our society.

The community relations field should Educate the Jewish and general community about the historic role of separation of religion and state as well as developments in the law regarding the relationship of religion and state and the right to free exercise of religion; Defend the right of religious individuals and organizations to speak, debate, and advocate on matters of public policy where appropriate; Advocate on the federal and state level for policies that promote the full and free exercise of religious liberty by individuals and institutions as well as promote the appropriate relationship between religion and state by insisting that all governmental actions have a clear non-religious, neutral purpose, neither endorse nor unduly inhibit religious practice, and do not extensively entangle government and religion; Engage in dialogue with interfaith partners, including those with divergent viewpoints, about the importance of religious diversity and focus on how religious communities can work together to foster greater respect for different viewpoints; and, Work in coalitions at the state and federal levels to preserve and promote legislation and constitutional protections that provide for separation of church and state and the protection of the right to religious practice, and oppose legislation and regulations that undermine them. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Charitable Choice

The JCPA supports public funding of social service programs operated by religiously affiliated organizations, when legislation authorizing such funding contains appropriate safeguards that will prevent First Amendment violations and protect the religious freedom of program beneficiaries and employees of service providers. (Agenda 2000-2001)

The JCPA agrees that religiously affiliated institutions may provide valuable and efficient social services, and may qualify for government funding for such programs.

However, government funding of social services through religiously affiliated organizations must contain appropriate and effective First Amendment safeguards such as those that prevent proselytization, coercion or indoctrination and that safeguard clients and service provider employees against discrimination on the basis of religion. Therefore, the JCPA will continue to oppose the passage of legislation that does not contain appropriate safeguards. Additionally, the community relations field must be increasingly vigilant and vocal in monitoring the implementation of federal block grant programs at the state and local level to prevent First Amendment violations and to protect the religious freedom of program beneficiaries and employees of service providers. (Agenda 1999-2000)

The JCPA urges that during welfare reauthorization the removal from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) ‘charitable choice’ provisions that omit meaningful and effective First Amendment safeguards. TANF must include protections which clearly state that no funds may be used to proselytize, coerce or indoctrinate; that no institution receiving funding may require worship as a condition for receiving TANF related benefits, and that no institution receiving TANF block grant funding may engage in employment practices in a manner inconsistent with governing civil rights laws. (Resolution adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

Disaster Response

The JCPA believes that religiously affiliated social service providers and educational facilities can play an important role in disaster response, but the transfer of public funds to such providers must be accomplished in a way that maximizes safeguards against religious coercion, proselytization, or discrimination. Furthermore, religious providers of social services cannot take the place of government, which must be held accountable for adequately and effectively responding to disaster; The exigent circumstances of a disaster should never be an excuse to waive vital protections for workers, contractors and others. In no circumstances should any emergency changes in policy be anything but temporary and narrowly tailored. (Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

Free Exercise of Religion

The JCPA supports passage of Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) legislation at the state level, where needed. Another priority is passage of the Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA), which would strengthen federal laws requiring employers to reasonably accommodate employees’ religious needs.

The Jewish community is overwhelmingly committed to the notion that religious liberty should be afforded the highest level of constitutional protection like other fundamental constitutional rights. Our community is also sensitive to the concerns that have been raised with regard to the Religious Liberty Protection Act’s (RLPA) potential impact upon state and local civil rights ordinances, but we are troubled by the fact that a great deal of misinformation has been deployed against RLPA in connection with these concerns, for no JCPA agency that has supported the cause of religious liberty has done so for the purpose of harming America’s civil rights protections.

The Jewish community remains united in its commitment to achieving the goal embodied in RLPA — the promotion of religious liberty and affording that liberty the highest level of constitutional protection. We will work to find acceptable ways, within a legislative framework, to achieve this goal while simultaneously being sensitive to possible adverse impact upon civil rights interests. JCPA will work to secure the passage of religious liberty legislation in a manner consistent with this statement. (Agenda 2000-2001)

Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act

The JCPA believes that houses of worship, like all charitable institutions, must not engage in partisan political campaign activity, but are appropriate settings for nonpartisan presentations that allow for the exchange of views with candidates and office holders.

The community relations field should: Oppose legislative efforts to allow houses of worship to engage in any partisan political activity; Build coalitions to educate about the freedoms of speech and advocacy that currently exist, and the importance of keeping America’s houses of worship separated from partisan

political campaign activities; and, Urge compliance with and enforcement of restrictions against partisan activity by houses of worship. (Resolutions adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Language and Identity Schools

The JCPA believes that legislation authorizing such language and identity charter schools must ensure that these schools hold to their public mandate as secular institutions. CRCs should work to ensure that significant oversight exists to ensure that these schools fulfill their public mandate in all respects as secular institutions. Significant transparency and appropriate and stringent oversight are needed to ensure that curriculum and instruction teach the foundations of a representative democracy and are purely nonsectarian. The task force is urged to examine the impact of these schools on the Jewish community. (Resolution Adopted at the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

Religious Symbols in Public Places

The Jewish community relations field will continue to vigorously oppose the use of government property as a forum for the promotion of religious views. While Jews respect the important role that religion plays in shaping private and public morals, religion should not be on display in the nation's courtrooms, which are meant to represent the impartial, objective application of secular rule of law. Nor should religious items be placed in other public areas, where the danger of implied government sponsorship is present, and where insensitivity to those of different faiths is particularly oppressive and threatening.

Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJCA) does not join the blanket condemnation of religious displays on government property. (Agenda 1998-1999)

School Prayer - Religion in Public Schools

The community relations field must continue to monitor these activities, such as 'See You at the Pole' events, to ensure that they are not organized by school administrators or teachers, and that students are not subjected to coercion or harassment because they choose not to participate. Although the organized Jewish community long has championed freedom of speech and religious expression, those fundamental principles must be exercised within the limits set by the establishment clause, which are especially critical in classrooms where children are captive audiences and are more vulnerable to religious indoctrination. (Agenda 1999-2000)

The JCPA continues to oppose all forms of organized public prayer at or in connection with schools sponsored events and activities where other students are captive audiences whether led by students, faculty, or others. The JCPA will continue to oppose unconstitutional measures such as the bill to permit the display of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms. Nevertheless, the JCPA recognizes that America's public schools are not meant to be "religion-free" zones, and that there are constitutionally appropriate ways to teach about religions — their views, roles in history, culture, philosophy, literature and the arts. Additionally, the JCPA will continue to oppose initiatives to eliminate the study of evolution from public school science curricula and/or to promote the teaching of creationism. (Agenda 2000-2001)

Stem Cell and Therapeutic Cloning Research

Society today stands on the threshold of a new era in biomedical research. A debate has emerged in American society at large and among our elected leaders as to whether public policy should permit, encourage, restrict or ban the further conduct of this biomedical research. The community relations field should support: Research using embryonic stem cells including those developed through Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT); Government funding for such research; Efforts by the scientific community to develop regulations and monitor those using SCNT technology; Appropriate legislative actions consistent with the above objectives, including legislation that encourages the development of new stem cell lines in addition to the existing stem cell lines already approved for funding by the federal

government; The creation of a fully funded and empowered oversight body comprising of scientists and ethicists to monitor this research, paying special attention to ensuring that the research is restricted to stem cells of very early embryonic development, prior to implantation in a uterus. The community relations field should oppose efforts to restrict or penalize scientists, clinicians, or patients for participating in stem cell research and SCNT technology for therapeutic purposes. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Vouchers

The JCPA believes that vouchers are not the panacea for dramatically improving the education of poor children or for overcoming the daunting challenges faced by urban schools. Rather, the JCPA is concerned that voucher programs are likely to drain precious financial resources from public school systems, and eventually lead to even less financial and civic investment in public education; result in the best students, and/or those with the most actively involved parents, being "skimmed" from public schools, leaving behind those children who are not accepted into private schools or whose parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's education to take advantage of voucher programs, thereby further depressing the quality of these public schools and the life chances of their students; and not provide sufficient funds to cover the entire cost of private school tuition, thereby benefiting only those parents who can make up the difference.

The JCPA strongly supports the development and continuation of quality programs designed to improve public education. The JCPA believes that it is imperative for the organized Jewish community to reaffirm its commitment to the nation's public schools, where most of its children have been and continue to be educated.

The JCPA and the majority of American Jews remain firmly committed to the belief that the wall of separation between church and state is an essential bulwark for religious freedom in the United States. The JCPA reiterates its long-standing belief that publicly funded vouchers used for sectarian school tuition costs seriously undermine the fundamental principles of separation of church and state, as expressed both in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and parallel provisions in state constitutions. It is the JCPA's view that whether vouchers are paid directly to sectarian schools or are disbursed to parents, the underlying effect is the same: American taxpayers are compelled to support financially, and therefore promote, religious beliefs they may not share, thereby infringing upon their religious freedom. The JCPA emphasizes once again its view that the purpose of the Establishment Clause is not to ensure that the government adopts a neutral or impartial position with respect to religion, but that it neither promote or endorse religion nor entangle itself in religious affairs at all. Therefore, no matter how neutrally designed a particular voucher program may be, if it includes private sectarian schools, the JCPA believes that it violates the Establishment Clause, because it utilizes public funds to promote religious and religiously-based education. The JCPA believes that the use of public funds to cover tuition costs at private sectarian schools is therefore irreconcilable with basic First Amendment principles that dictate the relationship between church and state in America.

As a matter of principle, the JCPA believes that the responsibility for solving the crisis in Jewish education lies first and foremost within the Jewish community, and not with federal, state or local governments. The JCPA applauds initiatives by Jewish philanthropists, educators, and religious leaders to increase awareness about the need to dramatically increase the Jewish community's support for its day schools and other educational programs and to commit financial resources to achieve this goal. For the reasons stated above, the JCPA therefore resolves to reaffirm its opposition to publicly-funded voucher programs that aid non-public schools; to recommit itself to playing a leadership role in the quest to improve American public education, by seeking sound, innovative methods of improving public schools, and actively advocating for improved budgets and other reforms at federal, state, and local levels; to

dedicate itself to addressing the need to strengthen Jewish education, primarily but by no means exclusively by ensuring adequate funding for Jewish day schools, after-school synagogue programs, summer camps, and Israel experiences; and to encourage Jewish community relations agencies throughout the United States to devote their energy and resources to grass-roots programs that will both improve public schools and also foster Jewish continuity. (Statement adopted in February 1998)

The JCPA reaffirms the October 1999 vote of its Board of Directors endorsing the significance and value of Jewish day school education and calls for increased individual and communal support for Jewish day schools. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJCA) dissents from the JCPA voucher study. We believe that the Jewish community has traditionally been committed to principles that should lead it to support school choice initiatives. Those principles include: (1) a commitment to social justice reflected in a desire to minimize the role of personal wealth in one's ability to secure the basic needs and services that secure a dignified and productive life; (2) a commitment to fight discrimination based upon religion; and, (3) a desire to stem the tide of assimilation and promote Jewish continuity through providing a Jewish education for all Jewish children. (Study adopted at the 1998 Plenum)

CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Overview: Civil Rights and Individual Liberties

The American Jewish Community has historically supported civil rights and individual liberties. The mission statement of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs expresses a commitment to protect, preserve, and promote a just American society. The American Jewish community has a “direct stake” in promoting individual liberties, and an “ethical imperative” to do so, recognizing that our values call us to assure freedom, justice, and liberty for all peoples, of all faiths, creeds and ethnicities.

The struggle to maintain and preserve civil rights and individual liberties has been an ongoing one, requiring eternal vigilance. It remains so today, perhaps even more so. History has taught us the danger of compromising individual rights at times of crisis. As always, the needs to protect our system of government and our nation require that we balance the rights and interests of society with those of the individual.

Increasingly, challenges to civil liberties and individual rights arise in the state and municipal arena. A concerted effort has been made to challenge the role of courts, traditionally a bulwark against the ‘tyranny of the majority,’ in protecting the rights of individuals.

The JCPA believes that the Jewish community must broaden its focus from viewing civil rights and individual liberties as matters falling exclusively within the purview of the federal branches of government. Important battle lines are being drawn state-by-state, as well as locally, on matters of vital concern to our interests and moral imperatives.

Efforts to amend the federal or state constitutions and statutes, or local ordinances to narrow the rights of individuals, or to strip courts of authority to consider various types of civil rights claims, pose a profound danger to civil rights and liberties. Often politically motivated, these efforts threaten to undermine the very concept of separation of powers. Even subjects which we might not necessarily endorse substantively often need protection from the ‘tyranny of the majority’, which is one of the most important functions served by the judicial branch at both the federal and state levels.

The Community Relations Field should make a high priority of working across community lines to address state and local, as well as federal, civil rights issues; Actively support civil rights coalitions on matters where there is a consensus communal position. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

Affirmative Action, Race and Criminal Justice

The JCPA supports affirmative action by both government and the private sector that provide such outreach remedies as: compensatory education, training and job counseling; intensive recruitment of qualified and qualifiable individuals, using not only traditional but also public and private resources that reach members of disadvantaged groups; and ongoing review of established job and admissions requirements to assure that they are performance related and free of bias. While opposing quotas as inconsistent with principles of equality, we recognize the need for numerical data and statistical procedures to measure and help assure the effectiveness of affirmative action programs. (Policy adopted June 1973, amended in 1975 and 1981, reaffirmed April 1995)

The JCPA believes Affirmative action is an important safeguard of racial equality, and should be supported as long as race is one of many factors, quotas are not utilized, and only individuals judged to be qualified are accepted or rewarded and programs are narrowly tailored to achieve diversity; There is continued need for numerical data and statistical procedures to measure and help assure the effectiveness of affirmative action programs, so long as those data are not used to establish numerical quotas; The Supreme Court was correct in stating that “the state has a compelling interest” in ensuring diverse students bodies, using race as one factor among others in university admissions.

The community relations field should: Oppose legislative initiatives or popular referenda that seek to ban affirmative action programs that are consistent with the position previously established by JCPA; Work with broad and diverse coalitions to increase grassroots support for affirmative action programs that are consistent with the position previously established by JCPA and oppose affirmative action bans that target such programs; Continue to educate the Jewish community about affirmative action and its importance from both civil rights and Jewish values perspectives; Reassure our partners in other ethnic communities – especially the African American community and other constituencies that support affirmative action – that we favor affirmative action programs, as outlined in JCPA policy. (Resolution adopted by the 2004 Plenum)

Recognizing the responsibility of government at all levels to act forcefully to prevent crime, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) historically has advocated crime fighting strategies that include both strict enforcement measures and intervention initiatives designed to prevent violence (JCPA Policy on Crime and Violence adopted June, 1995). To the degree that problems exist, we must call upon our political leadership and public officials to move with deliberate speed toward the amelioration of such conditions and the institution of appropriate reforms.

The JCPA has supported the call for a death penalty moratorium until issues of fairness, impartiality, and the risk of error are resolved; and registered and herein reaffirms its unequivocal opposition to the practice of racial and ethnic profiling as not only unfair but detrimental to democracy. The JCPA further resolves to support measures to improve police/community relations, to familiarize all sides with cultural diversity and enable them to better understand minority sensitivities and also the difficult job required of police, such as: Greater efforts to recruit, hire, and also promote minority police officers; Measures to ensure accountability of offending officers and supervising officials; Initiatives to provide enhanced training and continuing education of all police department employees; Programs that encourage officers to develop close ties to the neighborhoods they serve; and Funding by Congress of measures within the Crime Control Act of 1994 that provide for the accurate collection of comprehensive national data on the

use of excessive force by police, including data on people killed or injured by police shootings or other types of force.

Speak out against incidents and patterns of police harassment and brutality; Reaffirm opposition to excessive or indiscriminate use of mandatory minimum sentencing laws, in keeping with the JCPA Policy on Crime and Violence; Call for repeal of state and federal laws that require mandatory incarceration of first-time drug offenders, for remedying the sentencing disparity between crack and cocaine offenses, increased government and community support for effective substance abuse and education programs, and for the restoration of judicial discretion in these cases; Call for the state and federal laws that require mandatory incarceration of first-time drug offenders, for remedying the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine offenses, increasing government and community support for effective substance abuse and education programs, and for the restoration of judicial discretion in these cases; Call on government officials and especially juvenile correctional systems to treat juveniles without regard to race or ethnicity at all phases of juvenile proceedings; Call for full enforcement of the existing federal mandate that disproportionate minority confinement of juveniles must be analyzed and addressed, when found to exist, and for the application of penalties required by law against those systems that fail to fulfill that mandate; Encourage constituent agencies to work with state and local agencies as well as other coalition partners to document disparate treatment of minorities and the poor, to study its causes, to educate the community about this issue, and to work to eliminate such disparities; and Call for redirection of public resources from prisons to community and substance abuse programs that can be effective in creating better social conditions and reducing crime. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum)

AIDS

The JCPA supports the removal of HIV from the immigration restriction list. The Jewish community relations field supports federal and state legislation that includes anti-discrimination provisions and increased federal funding for research, voluntary bloodtesting, counseling and other relevant services to all affected populations and is opposed to mandatory HIV testing. (JPP 1994-1995)

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights of Gays and Lesbians

While the agency has taken no position on questions pertaining to homosexual life-styles, the JCPA opposes efforts to subjugate or deny essential liberties to members of any minority group in the United States. Therefore, in addition to supporting the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA), the JCPA supports passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would create a federal prohibition against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The JCPA also supports other legislative efforts at the state and local levels that would prevent discrimination in housing, public accommodation, and education. Exemptions designed to protect the right of religious institutions to carry out their religious purposes should be incorporated into all such legislation. The JCPA opposes efforts to repeal state statutes that protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation. (Agenda 1999-2000)

Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations is opposed to discrimination against any individual. Jewish law, however, prohibits homosexual activity, and we cannot join in a statement or initiative that could be interpreted to imply otherwise.

Civil Liberties and Security

The JCPA believes that: the debate about the civil liberties implications of the War on Terrorism has been impaired by hyperbole. It is not productive to describe those who endorse measures to combat terrorism as opponents of individual rights unduly infringing on civil liberties; nor is it productive to characterize those who have criticized aspects of the war on terrorism as unpatriotic. Vigorous efforts to protect Americans from terrorism and advocacy to protect civil liberties are the essence of patriotism; That

where measures are undertaken to combat terrorism that have the potential to conflict with vital civil liberties protections and other American and Jewish values, the protection of civil liberties requires that strong legal checks be maintained over the exercise of governmental power and that such actions be carried out in secrecy only when necessary and subject to prompt judicial review; That the USA PATRIOT Act contains several provisions that seek to increase the security of Americans, most with safeguards to prevent civil liberties abuses. These include measures that allow foreign intelligence and domestic law enforcement to communicate, and procedures facilitating sensitive investigations. At the same time, some of the law enforcement tools provided in the USA PATRIOT Act would not be significantly hindered by increased judicial oversight. When legislation is proposed to dilute existing privacy protections, at a minimum, there must be a substantial, public showing of the need for such measures to combat terrorism, and the measures should impact on privacy rights as narrowly as reasonably possible and all such changes should contain sunset provisions. Legislation is necessary to modify aspects of the USA PATRIOT Act to provide reasonable limits on law enforcement's authority without hampering their ability to investigate and prevent terrorism. Such measures should include amending the USA PATRIOT Act to provide reasonable time caps subject to extension by court order on sneak and peek warrants; to delay notification of subjects under such warrants only in cases where terrorism or actions of a foreign agent are suspected; to require as much specificity as prudent of the target or location of the targets of surveillance; to raise the standards for orders under Section 215 of the act, confining them to terrorism investigations, and requiring a greater showing of cause or individualized suspicion; to place reasonable time limits on gag orders for secret searches; and generally to provide greater judicial oversight in terrorism and other related investigations including mechanisms for judicial approval of search warrants and judicial review of detentions; That several administrative actions outside the scope of the USA PATRIOT Act have also infringed upon civil liberties and should be reversed or modified, including those that adversely impact the preeminent right of all individuals to competent legal counsel. We remain troubled by the application of Enemy Combatant status to American citizens captured in the United States, extended and secret detentions, and the potential trial of terrorism suspects with abridged due process protections. We reiterate our opposition to the Department of Justice directive that allows federal officials to monitor conversations between certain detained individuals and their lawyers without judicial approval. This directive has the effect of weakening not only the protection of attorney-client privilege, but the right to legal counsel altogether; That it is not appropriate, except in circumstances involving an identifiable and present threat, for law enforcement officials to investigate citizens or permanent residents based solely on the basis of ethnicity or religion. In fact, too narrow a focus on ethnicity or religion could allow terrorists to elude detection. Further, the government should not investigate persons solely based upon their having engaged in constitutionally protected speech or association, although association with persons known or reasonably suspected of supporting terrorism clearly justifies further investigation of an individual.

The community relations field should: Oppose the outright repeal of all or most of the USA PATRIOT Act, recognizing that these proposals would remove from law enforcement many tools that are necessary to combat terrorism, and would not obviate those provisions outside the USA PATRIOT Act that are of concern; Support legislation to modify specific sections of the USA PATRIOT Act, including increased Congressional and judicial oversight on the performance of the Executive Branch under the law. This will allow us to evaluate the successes and failures of these anti-terrorism provisions; Organize and work to promote civil and informed public discourse concerning the balancing of civil liberties and the war on terrorism; Work in coalitions to learn about the effects of the USA PATRIOT Act on other ethnic and religious communities. (Resolution adopted by the 2004 Plenum)

The JCPA understands the need to combat terrorism aggressively and to provide law enforcement with the tools to combat this complex threat. The JCPA believes it is essential that a proper balance be struck between combating terror and protecting civil liberties. Preventing acts of terror may indeed lead to

different determinations about how to apply civil liberties principles than might be made in other circumstances. We recognize that persons of good faith may differ as to what constitutes the proper balance between combating terror and protecting civil liberties, and we believe that the debate on this issue should be free of rancor, invective and partisanship. Further, we believe it is important that, in making decisions which may impinge upon civil liberties, our government not allow legitimate and urgent concerns to lead us to act without taking the time to assess and debate fully the civil liberties implications of proposed steps. We are particularly concerned about three instances in which we believe the government has apparently failed to strike the proper balance:

1. The Department of Justice directive allowing federal officials, without judicial approval, to listen in on conversations between certain detained individuals and their lawyers. This measure, which was instituted without congressional approval or public deliberation, undermines the due process protections in existing law that prevent such eavesdropping from taking place without a court order. The directive has the effect of weakening not only the protection of attorney-client privilege, but the basic right to competent legal counsel altogether. Lawyers cannot advocate for their clients effectively if they must constantly fear undermining their cases by merely speaking with the individuals whom they are sworn to represent.
2. An order by Attorney General John Ashcroft allowing immigrants to be detained without charge for an unspecified "reasonable time" during a "national emergency." This order gives the Justice Department effectively the same power of indefinite detention that it sought – and was specifically denied – in the anti-terrorism legislation. There may be a need to detain certain individuals who have been determined by a court to be suspects or potential witnesses in cases of terrorism and who might flee if released. However, many feel this regulation violates not only the due process protections of the Sixth Amendment, but the will of Congress as well.
3. The proposed use of military tribunals to try suspects. Our government should have some flexibility in the manner in which suspected terrorists are prosecuted. Open military tribunals, bound by the traditional protections that govern both our civilian and military courts, might be an important tool in prosecuting the exponents of terror. As the Defense Department finalizes guidelines for the tribunals, it should take steps to preserve the principles that make both justice and freedom essential values of America's legal fabric.

Finally, we strongly support the use of sunset provisions that Congress has included in many of its actions in addressing this crisis. We believe that the best way to ensure that these measures comport with the Constitution and the values enshrined in it is, where possible and practical, for such measures to be discussed, debated, and legislated utilizing our cherished system of checks and balances. (Resolution adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

The JCPA continues to support those actions of the President of the United States and of the Administration which do not endanger Constitutional rights, to apprehend, try, and punish those responsible for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, to eliminate the havens and harbors of terrorists internationally, to prevent future terrorist attacks on the United States and its citizens and interests, and ultimately to eliminate terrorism, strongly believes that adherence to fundamental principles of fairness and due process in investigating terrorism as well as apprehending, trying, and punishing those responsible for terrorist attacks is important not only to safeguard the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution but also to preserve the moral authority of the United States. We are particularly concerned about the treatment of United States citizens, including questions of indefinite detentions, denial of legal counsel and trials that are closed in their entirety. At the same time, JCPA believes that these valued protections must be applied in a balanced manner in light of what is reasonable under current

circumstances, and in light of the necessity to ensure the security of all Americans and believes that the war on terrorism must engage the root causes of this growing danger, namely the teaching of hatred and violence, especially that which permeates segments of the Islamic and Arab worlds, and which have frequently operated with acquiescence or outright support of foreign governments.

The community relations field should encourage public support for the Administration's efforts to apprehend and punish terrorists and to prevent future terrorist attacks, ensure that the political climate remains open and free, such that public discourse evaluating governmental action in the war on terrorism continues to be a valuable part of American democracy, continue to monitor the manner in which the war on terrorism is conducted to ensure that these important efforts do not infringe upon our fundamental freedoms, encourage the intensified use of diplomatic and other channels to advocate for elimination of anti-Semitic, anti-American, and pro-terrorism rhetoric, and advocate to make this a goal of U.S. foreign policy, and raise the issues of anti-Semitism, anti-Americanism, and terrorism with coalition partners, including in dialogue with the Arab American and Muslim-American communities, and encourage internal and public pronouncements which unequivocally reject terrorism and deliberate attacks on civilians as acceptable means of political expression. (Resolution adopted in February 2003).

We support the freezing of assets of groups and individuals that have been linked to terrorist activities, as well as moves by major corporations and philanthropies who have blocked donations to such organizations (Resolution Adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

Death Penalty

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) historically has stood in opposition to the death penalty. The JCPA reaffirms its call for a federal and statewide death penalty moratorium. Both supporters of the death penalty and opponents, such as the JCPA, are concerned about flaws in the system by which the government imposes sentences of death. We must not allow the understandable desire for punishment to overshadow the impartial pursuit of justice. The JCPA therefore, further resolves to urge that the study of factors that contribute to wrongful sentencing and convictions include racial disparities, disproportionately based on geographic location and income status of defendants, and adequacy of representation of capital defendants; urge the federal and state governments to provide legal mechanisms whereby persons sentenced to death can challenge their convictions or sentences, despite the passage of time, on the basis of reliable scientific information, such as DNA testing, not available at the time of trial or post-conviction proceedings; call on the federal and state governments to provide for the collection and analysis of data to determine the extent, if any, to which disparate treatment of those sentenced to death is attributable to race or ethnicity and to act to eliminate disparities, where they exist; call upon state legislatures in those states that do not impose a death penalty to reject calls for enactment of death penalty legislation; support recommendations of the American Bar Association, calling for the imposition of a moratorium on use of the death penalty by the federal government and all 50 states, to remain in force until policies and procedures can be implemented to ensure the fair and impartial administration of death penalty cases, and to minimize the risk that innocent people might be executed. These include: Assure that all those accused of capital crimes receive competent counsel at every step in the judicial process, with adequate funding for a fully investigated defense; Measures to preserve, enhance, and streamline the authority and responsibility of federal and state courts to exercise independent judgment on the merits of constitutional claims in state post-conviction and federal habeas corpus proceedings; Elimination of discrimination in capital sentencing on the basis of race of victim or defendant; and Provisions that inhibit execution of mentally retarded people and those who were under the age of 18 at the time of their offenses. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum)

Death Penalty Moratorium

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs resolves to call upon the President and the governors of all other states that impose the death penalty to impose a federal and state-wide moratorium on the death penalty, and to appoint a commission to expeditiously study the frequency with which inmates sentenced to death have later been found to be not guilty and the factors which contribute to wrongful conviction and the imposition of the death penalty in inappropriate cases; and support legislation to enact appropriate safeguards (such as access to DNA and other potentially exculpatory material) to guard against the execution of those who are not guilty. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

Gender Identity Discrimination

The JCPA supports state and federal legislation that would extend civil rights protections to individuals based on their real or perceived gender identity or expression. As with legislation such as the Employment Non Discrimination Act, we support the inclusion of a carefully drawn exemption for religious institutions. We encourage support for legislation that would extend civil rights protections to individuals based on their real or perceived gender identity and expression.

Flag Desecration

The JCPA believes that the principle of free speech protected by our Constitution and symbolized by our American flag is strong enough and precious enough to withstand even the most offensive speech. Among the truest tests of this principle is that even an act as abhorrent as burning or desecrating the flag is deserving of protection. The JCPA calls on the Congress and the American people to defeat efforts to amend the constitution to prohibit desecration of the flag and to support the Bill of Rights for which the flag stands. (Resolution adopted at the 1997 Plenum).

Free Speech-Attacks on Advocacy by Non-Profit Organizations

The organized Jewish community, in coalition with fellow members of the non-profit sector, must remain vigilant in opposing initiatives to impose severe restrictions on the ability of non-profit organizations to engage in advocacy on issues pertaining to their mission. (Agenda 1999-2000)

Free Speech Challenges in an Age of Cyber-Technology

As delineated in its Statement of Policy on Censorship, first adopted at the Plenum in 1962, the JCPA believes that "Jewish security is best furthered by a democratic society in which there is adherence to the Bill of Rights and its guarantees of freedom of expression." At the same time, the JCPA recognizes the evolving nature of speech and the need to consider and apply principles of free speech in light of new technology. (Agenda 2000-2001). The JCPA recommends the following Government Regulations: Support the use of filtering in publicly funded places that provide Internet access, such as schools and libraries, to block material harmful to minors, provided that unfiltered computers are available for use by adults; Advocate legislation to make illegal the use of the Internet to instruct and encourage individuals to engage in imminently violent criminal activities, including terrorism. Support legislation to protect the privacy of personal information collected on the Internet (such as financial, medical, and other sensitive data), and to provide greater individual control over the collection and use of that information; require privacy disclosures on web sites, consumer consent for use of data, and access by individuals to their own personal data; Promote measures to monitor and ensure that internet surveillance by law enforcement comport with individual liberties including freedoms of speech, association, and due process, and freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. Argue that the Internet communication should be afforded the same legal protection as other forms of speech. The JCPA recommends the following Voluntary Constraints call on Internet service providers (ISPs) to police their clients' web sites, reminding them there is no law requiring that they continue to do business (with) and provide services to sites that preach violence, teach bomb-making or promote other forms of terrorism; encourage ISPs to develop a common standard of

acceptable practices for use of their services; advocate increased public education regarding how privacy works on the Internet; press for privacy enhancing technologies that emphasize self-regulation; encourage parents to take responsibility for what their children view, to educate themselves and their children about the powers and proper use of the Internet, and to make use of filtering and blocking technologies, options for monitoring children's computers, and use of "green spaces" technology (whereby specified web pages are downloaded to a server, without providing full Internet access); promote development of websites designed to counter hate speech. Use the networking capability of the Internet itself to organize online communities that challenge, inform and counter hate messages; support efforts to promote "voluntary self-labeling," for example, asking search engines to require that all web sites label content when applying for a spot in their directories.

Racial Profiling by Police Departments

The JCPA registers its unequivocal opposition to the practice of racial profiling as detrimental to democracy. We call upon all communities and law enforcement agencies to combat this practice. Our community supports measures that will work toward stopping racial profiling and making police agencies more fair and effective. The measures include: more vigorous efforts to recruit, hire, retain and promote minority group members as police officers; making offending officers and supervising officials more accountable; requiring law enforcement agencies to compile and publish statistics which would uncover racial profiling; increasing community relations efforts and cooperation between people of all backgrounds and police departments, so that all sides may gain a better understanding of minority sensitivities as well as the very difficult and dangerous job police officers are required to do; and support initiatives that provide and encourage continuing education at all levels for officers. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

Opposition to Torture

The JCPA opposes the use of torture and affirms the continued validity and legal definitions present in the Geneva Conventions and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Opposes the practice of 'extraordinary rendition', which is commonly defined as an extrajudicial procedure that sends criminal suspects to other countries, specifically to those that are suspected of using torture during interrogation; Supports allowing all people in U.S. custody subject to the Geneva Conventions the right to be visited by the International Committee of the Red Cross; Supports efforts to examine past practices and ensure that interrogations by military and intelligence agencies comport with international conventions; and, Urges the community relations field to work independently and in coalitions to advance the above. (adopted at the 2006 Plenum)

Workplace Religious Freedom Act

Legislation to protect religious liberty in the workplace - the Workplace Religious Freedom Act - is a priority of the organized Jewish community. This measure, intended to assure that employers have a meaning obligation to accommodate their employee's religious practices by the restoring religious accommodation provision of the 1972 amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act to the weight Congress originally intended and that the JCPA supports. (JPP 1997-1998, Agenda 1999-2000, Agenda 2000-2001)

HOLOCAUST

Holocaust

While there will not always be unanimity within the Jewish community on every facet of this controversy, the JCPA believes that its member agencies have a vital role to play in coordinating local responses to issues of Holocaust restitution.

The JCPA commends those nations that have already made significant gestures with regard to resolving restitution issues in a forthright, expeditious manner. The JCPA also commends those countries that have created historical commissions to investigate and record the details of their wartime activity, and urges those implicated nations that have not embarked on such initiatives to do so. The American government is to be applauded for setting an example through its creation of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States. Foreign governments should be urged to make relevant archives and records accessible to historians, and to continue engaging in productive dialogue with the American and Israeli governments, survivor representatives, and the Jewish community, in order to hasten the process of financial restitution. Such efforts will assist in the creation of a historical record that will be an enduring reminder of the world's indifference to, and, in some instances, direct or indirect complicity with, the Shoah. As the world focuses to an ever greater extent on the material losses incurred by Holocaust victims and their heirs, it is incumbent upon the organized Jewish community to ensure that this process does not detract in any way from the important task of educating people worldwide about broader themes of genocide, anti-Semitism, and prejudice. Increasing the quantity and variety of Holocaust education programs will help to make the Shoah meaningful to generations who will never have the opportunity to meet a Holocaust survivor in person, and for whom World War II is perhaps as remote an event as the Civil War. Renewed interest in the Holocaust undoubtedly will continue to have a profound impact on Jewish-Christian relations. Controversy surrounding the release of the Vatican's report *We Remember*, which attempted to address the role of the Catholic Church with regard to the Holocaust, as well as other events, such as the erection of a field of crosses at Auschwitz/Birkenau by extremist Polish Catholics and the canonization of the Jewish-born Carmelite nun Edith Stein, who perished at Auschwitz, have exacerbated Catholic-Jewish and Polish-Jewish tensions. Additionally, the organized Jewish community continues to press for the release of documents from the Vatican archives that will shed further light on the Church's activities during the Holocaust. (Agenda 1999-2000)

Assets Restitution and Needy Holocaust Survivors

The JCPA will continue to support efforts to resolve outstanding restitution and compensation issues as speedily as possible for the benefit of aging Holocaust survivors. JCPA member agencies will continue to play a key role in coordinating communal responses and outreach to survivors and their heirs, and in promoting policies and programs that will be sensitive to the needs of survivors and will preserve the ultimate lessons of the Holocaust. One important priority will be the passage of appropriate federal and state legislation to exempt restitution payments from taxation, as well as from income or asset calculations for means-tested public benefits programs (Agenda 2000-2001)

The JCPA hereby asserts that as long as Holocaust survivors living anywhere in the world are lacking basic needs, including food, shelter, medical care or any other form of assistance now or hereafter deemed necessary to allow them to live out the remainder of their lives in comfort and dignity, any and all Holocaust Related Funds now or hereafter obtained, from whatever source paid and by whatever agency administered, which are not legally restricted to a specific contrary purpose, shall be promptly disbursed to or on behalf of such Holocaust survivors in order to meet such needs. To the extent that there are Holocaust Related Funds remaining after all the present and anticipated needs of such Holocaust survivors have been fully met, it would be appropriate to consider the use of such remaining funds for programs of research, documentation and education of the Holocaust, among other uses.

The community relations field should educate themselves and others about the current conditions in which many Holocaust survivors live, raise this issue in their communities to determine the extent to which local survivors are living with significant unmet needs, raise these issues with agencies involved in the determination of the needs of Holocaust survivors and the allocation and disbursement of Holocaust Related Funds to meet those needs, and encourage such agencies to involve in their determinations

representatives of Holocaust survivors and professional social service agencies such as the Jewish Family and Children's Services.(Resolution adopted in February 2003)

Long Term Health Care for Holocaust Survivors

The JCPA and its member agencies support the pilot program initiated by Florida's Insurance Commissioner and the South Florida Survivors Coalition to fund long term home health care for Holocaust survivors. A program to fund much needed home health care for Florida's survivor population from funds already placed into an escrow account by the International Commission for eventual use representing "heirless" insurance proceeds. The plan would also call for the insurers liable for unpaid Holocaust era policies to contribute to the fund. The present proposal is designed only to commit the amount of "heirless funds" that would be allocated to the State of Florida through the process.

The JCPA calls on its member agencies to explore in their own communities the same kind of pilot program for long term health care for their Holocaust survivor community. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

Nazi War Criminals

The Jewish community relations field should continue its efforts to interpret to the Congress and the public the rationale for continual investigation and prosecution of Nazi war criminals and to assist the justice Department's efforts to seek evidence and witnesses that will lead to the denaturalization and deportation of Nazi war criminals from the United States. (JPP 1990-1991)

INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

Recent decades have marked considerable advances in interfaith dialogue and understanding. Religious diversity and respect for minority faiths has strengthened an America that has, in turn, provided tremendous opportunity for American Jews. Interfaith partnerships have provided an invaluable voice for civil rights, religious liberties, social justice, environmental protection, protection of religious minorities in other lands, and many other areas of concern. On occasion, the Jewish community has found itself at great distance from other faith communities on key issues. Where close relationships have existed, they have mitigated disharmony that might otherwise have resulted.

The Jewish community relations field reaffirms its longstanding commitment to working consistently toward strong interfaith understanding and positive working relationships with all faith communities.

Interfaith relations are a cornerstone of community relations and an activity of highest priority. The development of coalitions on issues of common concern can build relationships and networks that, in turn, will foster greater trust and understanding. There is tremendous need for increased dialogue on matters of social policy. Community relations agencies, both local and national, play a critical role in shaping and nurturing meaningful dialogue.

Faith groups should, as the groundbreaking Vatican declaration *Nostra Aetate* notes, understand other faiths as they understand themselves. (Resolution adopted Plenum 2008)

Aggressive and misleading proselytization remains a profound concern. We continue to condemn as deceptive and inappropriate the use of Jewish symbols and practices in the marketing of Christian religious groups as legitimate forms of Judaism. The community relations field should continue to monitor missionary Christian groups, including "Hebrew-Christians"; educate Jewish and non-Jewish leaders about the practices of missionary Christian activities; and assist Jewish groups to establish criteria

to enable the exclusion of those groups or individuals whose purported membership is for the purpose of promoting conversion of the Jews to Christianity or for other ulterior motives antithetical to the mission of that Jewish organization or institution. (Resolution adopted Plenum 2008, June 2002).

Catholic-Jewish Relations

The relationship between the Catholic and Jewish communities remains strong on the international, national, and local levels. The groundbreaking declarations made more than 40 years ago in *Nostra Aetate* have yielded, more than a generation later, a relationship that is deep and enduring. The American Jewish community welcomed a Vatican recognition in 2006 that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. American Jews mourned the passing of the late Pope John Paul II, a man who referred to the Jewish people as “the beloved elder brothers of the Church of the original covenant never abrogated.” We welcomed the news that in his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, was chosen a man who has shown great devotion to interfaith relations. We hold great hope that the relationship between Catholics and Jews will continue to deepen, and that this relationship will help us to bridge differences over matters that have caused concern in recent years such as the status of the Fundamental Agreement between the State of Israel and the Holy See; the increased flexibility given priests to use a Latin Rite with arguably anti-Jewish prayers; and denial of full access to Holocaust era archives. (Resolution adopted at the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

Mainline Protestant-Jewish Relations

In the years following *Nostra Aetate*, the Mainline Protestant churches took great strides to reframe in a positive manner the theological relationship between Christians and Jews. Strong statements or study guides have been developed by churches including the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, and other denominations belonging to the National Council of Churches (NCC). We have worked together in pursuit of the common values we garner from our shared texts and traditions. These churches remain important allies on a range of issues, including, among others, immigration, health care, poverty, and international human rights.

However, we find ourselves in sometimes bitter and often painful opposition on an issue we hold most dear: Israel and how to bring peace between Israelis and Palestinians. We call on all the churches to:

- understand and recognize the centrality of Israel to the Jewish people
- recognize unequivocally not only Israel’s right to exist, but also its right to exist as a Jewish state; support for a Palestinian right of return is inconsistent with such recognition.
- advance considered approaches to the conflict that clearly recognize the need for Palestinians to dismantle any terrorist infrastructure; and not reflexively blame the State of Israel for creating the conflict, the difficult humanitarian situation of many Palestinians, and the diminishment of a Christian presence in the Holy Land.
- view the Christian Zionist community in all its diversity and not simply as “Armageddon Theorists,” thus reducing to a stereotype those Christian friends of the Jewish state who come to their support for reasons other than to hasten a cataclysmic end to history.
- support efforts toward Israeli-Palestinian coexistence and peacemaking and reject unconstructive proposals such as boycotts, sanctions, and divestment.

Evangelical-Jewish Relations

The JCPA believes that increased dialogue between our communities could help each better understand the other and help build recognition of the range of issues on which Jews and Evangelical Christians are already working cooperatively: treatment of religious minorities in other lands, religious accommodation in the workplace, religious freedom restoration legislation, and social services.. Where appropriate this dialogue might also address issues where differences may remain between some segments of the Jewish community and Evangelical Christians, e.g., church-state separation, the role of religion in public life, women's and reproductive health issues, and perceptions of Islam in the modern world. In short, dialogue will possibly diminish some of the objections to Jewish-Evangelical ties and the sometimes ill-informed negative stereotypes that characterize many in each community, reaffirms that its communities and agencies can beneficially pursue interaction (dialogue and/or cooperation) with Evangelical Christians (Joint Program Plan 1994-1995), and that while the nature of such interaction should be molded to particular situations, our abiding objection to proselytization targeted at Jews must be clear and consistent (Resolution on Aggressive and Misleading Proselytization, June 2002), and recognizes that our interaction or partnership with Evangelical Christians on issues of common interest should not in any way affect the positions or actions of the Jewish community on issues on which we disagree.

The community relations field should, taking local and other dynamics into account, pursue expanded interaction with Evangelical Christians, seeking to learn and to teach, to confront and to cooperate where appropriate, work with the Evangelical community applying standard community relations principles in a way that strengthens America, Israel and our community, consult and involve appropriate rabbinic and Jewish organizational leaders, including JCPA, as this set of relationships develops, and explore opportunities to mobilize and harness the pro-Israel sentiments and activities of Evangelical Christians. (Resolution adopted in February 2003).

Muslim-Jewish Relations

We call on others to take steps which condemn, in unequivocal terms, the bigoted stereotyping, scapegoating and assaults of Muslim and Arab Americans that have occurred in the aftermath of September 11th. American Jews are especially sensitive to these immoral acts and recognize their corrupting influence on our society; deplors the bigotry emanating from some in the Muslim and Arab American communities and elsewhere that falsely accuse Jews, Israel or the so-called "Jewish controlled media" for responsibility in the September 11th attacks; applauds leaders in the Muslim community who have spoken forcefully against interpretations of Islam that have been used to justify and glorify terrorism, and urges all Muslim clergy and leaders, here and abroad, to reaffirm publicly the peaceful principles of their faith and to reject vehemently all acts of terror (Resolution Adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

Mormon-Jewish Relations

The American Jewish community welcomes increased dialogue and understanding with our Mormon neighbors. The Mormon community has made a significant effort to reach out to American Jews, hailing a long record of support for the Jewish state. This support is warmly welcomed, too. The relationship is not without strain. There is a need to honor commitments made not to posthumously baptize Jews. The Jewish community relations should continue to engage the Mormon community and, where appropriate, form coalitions on matters of common concern. (Resolution adopted at the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

Other Faith Communities

The American religious landscape is continually evolving. There are growing Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and other communities. They often experience many of the same issues that American Jews have faced and continue to face as minority communities of faith. In addition, xenophobia has

complicated life for minority communities. The Jewish community relations field should engage diverse religious communities and, where appropriate, form coalitions on matters of common concern. (Resolution adopted at the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

Misleading and Aggressive Proselytization

The increased aggressiveness of certain missionary Christian groups around the country is a matter of growing concern for the Jewish community. Utilizing misleading practices, some of these groups misrepresent themselves as Jews in an effort to enhance their proselytizing efforts.

Jewish organizations and community centers have been frequent foci of these groups, as have college campuses. Particularly disturbing have been efforts to convert vulnerable populations, including recent immigrants, youth, and the elderly in nursing homes.

The leadership of each major stream of Judaism - Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, and Reform have publicly and unequivocally rejected the "Hebrew-Christian" movement's claim to be a form of Judaism, and have objected to their disguised effort to proselytize and convert Jews.

The JCPA condemns the use of Jewish symbols and practices as deceptive and inappropriate in the marketing of Christian religious groups as legitimate forms of Judaism.

The community relations field should continue to monitor missionary Christian groups, including "Hebrew-Christians", educate Jewish and non-Jewish leaders about the practices of missionary Christian activities, particularly among vulnerable groups such as new immigrants, and the elderly, urge telephone directories to enforce their rules prohibiting false or fraudulent representations in their publications and to discontinue listing "Hebrew-Christian" congregations under 'synagogue' listings, and instead place them under less misleading designations, and develop mechanisms to support, and to provide expertise to Jewish organizations and institutions including synagogues, community centers, cemetery associations, camps, schools, campus, immigrant and senior citizen groups to evaluate, and where appropriate, amend membership or admission criteria to enable the exclusion of those groups or individuals whose purported membership is for the purpose of promoting conversion of the Jews to Christianity or for other ulterior motives antithetical to the mission of that Jewish organization or institution. (Resolution adopted in June 2002).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

ANTI-POVERTY

Emergency Funding and Disaster Relief

The JCPA believes that emergency preparation and response must become a key priority for cities, states and the federal government, with special attention paid to populations that have historically been vulnerable to natural disasters. Plans must consider the special needs of the elderly, disabled, and other population groups that lack physical or financial resources for transportation, ongoing access to shelter, medical care, food and other life essentials that are required in preparation for and after a devastating experience such as Hurricane Katrina. These plans must also incorporate the lessons of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, which revealed inadequacies in our nation's preparedness for both natural disasters and terrorist attacks; and that; Government should ensure that qualified leadership is in place with respect to disaster management, and that the sanctity of life should be the key determining factor that drives official responses in times of crisis and natural disaster. This includes organizations such as, but not limited to, emergency response agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The community relations field should encourage administration and congressional officials, and especially the leadership of both political parties, to visit both New Orleans and other affected areas in Louisiana and Mississippi. Only with a visit can one develop an appreciation for the nature and scope of this disaster; Encourage the federal government to act decisively concerning displaced people and devastated homes, and to consider seriously a Louisiana-led home rehabilitation bill like that of the Baker Bill (the Baker Bill would have created a federal housing corporation, buy devastated homes from homeowners and then re-sell them at market rates), in order for many homeowners to be able to restart their lives); Support investment in strong infrastructure in order to prevent another such tragedy by way of federal funding at the normal minimum level of 65% for both enhanced levee protection and coastal restoration, in adherence with the Louisiana 2025 Coastal Restoration Plan (this plan calls for an investment of \$25 billion in coastal restoration along the Gulf Coast) as well as rebuilding the levees to withstand Level 5 hurricanes; Encourage federal authorities to work alongside state and local officials in the rehabilitation and renewal of social service, educational, and medical facilities in Greater New Orleans; Support governmental funding of critical tools for emergency support. As an example, more than four years after the 9/11 attacks, emergency officials and police enforcement officials across the United States lack devices such as satellite telephones to function effectively at a time when telephone and cellular phone services are not working; Seize the moment and lead a national conversation about our priorities and the role of the private and public spheres to protect the most vulnerable among us. This conversation should highlight the need for regionally-focused, integrated measures, to help our neighbors and community members who lack the physical and/or financial resources for transportation, ongoing access to shelter, medical care, food and other life essentials that are required in a preparation for and after a devastating experience such as Hurricane Katrina; and, assist local leaders in planning for and implementing evacuation, rescue and relief efforts. (Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

The JCPA also believes that it is unacceptable in America, a nation of enormous potential and wealth, for there to exist vast swaths of impoverished people. Poverty, such as that which was thrust into the media spotlight and thus the conscience of all who witnessed the human tragedy in New Orleans, must be confronted and eliminated; the national conversation about the persistence of poverty must also address the issue of race in that it is intertwined with both the causes of poverty and with our public policy response; quality public education and the opportunity for students to graduate with skills that enable them to enter the workforce are vital to addressing the issues of poverty and economic vulnerability;

emergency preparation and response must become a key priority for cities, states and the federal government, with special attention paid to populations that have historically been vulnerable to natural disasters. Plans must consider the special needs of the elderly, disadvantaged, and minority communities and address transportation, ongoing access to shelter, medical care, food and other life essentials that are more readily available to those with personal resources. These plans must also incorporate the lessons of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, which revealed inadequacies in our nation's preparedness for both natural disasters and terrorist attacks; religiously affiliated social service providers and educational facilities can play an important role in disaster response, but the transfer of public funds to such providers must be accomplished in a way that maximizes safeguards against religious coercion, proselytization, or discrimination. Furthermore, religious providers of social services cannot take the place of government, which must be held accountable for adequately and effectively responding to disaster; the exigent circumstances of a disaster should never be an excuse to waive vital protections for workers, contractors and others. In no circumstances should any emergency changes in policy be anything but temporary and narrowly tailored; and that, investments in disaster-avoidance infrastructure and human capital must not be sacrificed to achieve short-term cost-savings.

The community relations field should seize the moment and lead a national conversation about our priorities and the role of the private and public spheres to protect the most vulnerable among us. This conversation should highlight the need for regionally-focused, integrated measures to help poor people lift themselves out of poverty. Many such programs enjoy bi-partisan support, including workforce development, job-creation strategies and access to quality education for all, such as HUD's successful Hope VI initiative, President Bush's proposed homeownership tax credit, and expansion of the earned income tax credit hold accountable those leaders at the local, state and federal levels who failed to heed prior warnings about the vulnerability of the New Orleans levee system, and who failed to plan adequately for and implement evacuation, rescue and relief efforts participate in local efforts to assist Gulf Coast evacuees who choose to reside temporarily or permanently in their community support appropriate initiatives – including federal legislation – to provide necessary funding for rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf Coast and extensions of safety net programs to sustain the victims assist local leaders in planning for and implementing evacuation, rescue and relief efforts in your community; and support investment in strong infrastructure in order to prevent another such tragedy.(Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

Poverty and Welfare Reform

The JCPA supports policies and programs that help move individuals and families out of poverty, that provide work opportunities at wages that allow for self-sufficiency, adequate financial and social service supports -- including job training, transportation and child care services, and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (with reasonable safeguards against abuse) – and that attack problems of inadequate education, housing, healthcare, and persistent, fundamental illiteracy (Agenda 2000-2001).

The JCPA views welfare reform as part of an overall commitment and strategy to reduce poverty. We believe the federal government has a primary responsibility for alleviating poverty and for ensuring a basic minimum level of support to provide a decent living standard for the poor. The level of government funding for welfare benefits should be brought as quickly as possible to the federally defined poverty line, with regional adjustments for differentials in living costs. Any action that would further reduce net benefits to individuals, such as taxing welfare dollars, should be rejected. Time limits on cash assistance should be contingent upon individual circumstances (allowing waivers for those with disabilities or other needs), availability of adequate education and training services, the ability of the economy to generate sufficient numbers of permanent jobs within reasonable geographic access, the needs of dependent children, and the government's capacity to provide necessary support services. The JCPA recognizes federal, state, local, private, and individual responsibility in working to develop a coordinated program of

support for welfare recipients and their families. (Principles for Addressing Poverty and Welfare Reform, June 1994)

The JCPA supports the guarantee of federal workplace protections laws covering health, safety and civil rights, for workfare workers (JPP 1998-1999); opposes tax cuts while vital human services are also being cut (JPP 1996-1997).

As TANF and other provisions of the 1996 welfare law are reauthorized, the JCPA supports the adoption of measures to shift the focus from caseload reduction to poverty reduction, including: incentives to states to implement policies that reduce child and adult poverty rates; adequate funding to meet the challenges of an economic downturn and secure strengthened, enhanced services for those with barriers to employment (such as domestic violence, homelessness, physical disability, mental illness, and substance abuse); modified time limit requirements (in light of economic conditions and the number of those remaining on welfare who face significant barriers to employment); modified restrictions on education and training to increase support for skill development, thereby enhancing opportunity for employment with potential for advancement; restoration of benefits to qualified legal immigrants. We also call for improved access and funding for key federal non-TANF programs serving low-income families, including the Food Stamp Program, childcare subsidies through the Child Care Development Block Grant, to move toward serving all eligible children, as well as such programs as Head Start, WIC, and the Social Services Block Grant. Finally, we call for removal from TANF of 'charitable choice' provisions that omit meaningful and effective First Amendment safeguards. (Resolution adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

The JCPA reaffirms its commitment to fully funding social programs that are part of an overall commitment and strategy to confront poverty. The JCPA believes that: The federal and state governments have a primary responsibility for alleviating poverty and for ensuring a basic minimally adequate level of support to provide a decent living standard for the poor; 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; Poverty reduction, not just caseload reduction, should be a primary goal of welfare reform, with incentives to states to implement policies that reduce child and adult poverty rates; and, Supporting, strengthening and sustaining public schools is crucial for advancing the primary route for most children into full participation in the nation's economic, political and social life.

The community relations field should: Urge adequate federal and state funding for programs that promote self-sufficiency and reduce poverty; Call for improved access and funding for key federal non-TANF programs serving low-income families, including the Food Stamp Program, childcare subsidies through the Child Care Development Block Grant, LIHEAP, Sections 8 and 202 housing, as well as such programs as Head Start, WIC, Welfare and the Social Services Block Grant; and, Work to make sure that the institution of public education is fully funded. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Minimum Wage

The JCPA calls for a further increase in the minimum wage and supports the concept of linking the minimum wage to the annual Consumer Price Index to sustain a wage level that reflects changing economic conditions (Agenda 2000-2001).

Living Wage

The JCPA supports state and municipal legislation creating community-based living wage ordinances that make it possible for full-time workers to earn incomes above the federally defined poverty level for their community. These ordinances would apply to individuals whose wages are funded by the taxpayers, whether they are employees of governmental bodies or of government contractors, subcontractors, or

recipients of other forms of government economic assistance. Such ordinances should be developed on a community-by-community basis and considered within the context of local needs and concerns. Legislation should be drawn so as not to have the unintended result of adversely affecting services to the poor. Where necessary, waivers may be provided or other special arrangements made to address any potential negative economic impact to smaller projects and to protect services to low-income constituents generally provided by nonprofit agencies that serve the poor (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum).

Budget and Tax Policy

The JCPA opposes efforts to enact a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Resolution adopted in 1994; Resolution adopted in 1995; JPP 1995-1996, JPP 1996-1997).

To feed the hungry, clothe the poor, heal the sick, and educate our children, our federal government requires the resources that come from tax revenue. The JCPA calls on the Administration and Congress to enact legislation that will allow the federal government to meet its responsibilities to its citizens and to reject efforts to make permanent the recent tax cuts. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum)

Beginning in the mid-1990s, welfare reform accelerated the funding of entitlement programs by means of capped block grants, shifting responsibility for national anti-poverty programs to cash-strapped states. In addition, the tax cuts passed by Congress since 2001 have resulted in fewer federal dollars available to states, forcing state governments to cut Medicaid, senior programs, child care assistance, and education while providing little if any benefit to middle- and low-income taxpayers.

This devolution, shifting federal responsibilities to state governments, has been exacerbated in many states by draconian proposals, often in the form of ballot initiatives that further undermine the ability to address critical human needs, particularly safety-net services that protect the well-being of the most vulnerable citizens. These proposals include so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) initiatives aimed at imposing unreasonable limits on state spending and forcing severe reductions in government services (in the November 2006 elections, TABOR initiatives were on the ballot in Maine, Nevada, Nebraska and Oregon). Additionally, there have been proposals to change the tax code to allow for additional deductions, primarily benefiting the wealthiest at the expense of the neediest.

At the federal level, some advocate pay-as-you-go proposals whereby program funding increases would have to be offset by funding cuts, while tax cuts would not have to be similarly offset. Also, proposals for a fixed deficit target would trigger automatic across-the-board cuts in entitlement spending if targets are not met.

Commensurate with the JCPA's Confronting Poverty initiative, the community relations field should oppose those state or federal tax measures and budget procedures that would restrict or impede funding for vital social services; Oppose Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) and other initiatives that threaten to paralyze state governments' ability to provide essential services; Continue to work to ensure that social services and public education are fully funded; Urge the federal government to reexamine block grant formulas to insure that states receive adequate federal funding to account for demographic changes (e.g. increasing elderly and poor populations) that occur over time and that require additional social services. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

Social Security Reform

The JCPA will respond to reform proposals based upon criteria in its Statement on Social Security Reform and congruent with policies of the United Jewish Communities, representing the health and human service agencies concerned with the welfare of the Jewish elderly. Among these criteria, reforms should: retain Social Security's original purpose, universal quality, and reliability; ensure all beneficiaries,

including those with disabilities, receive a minimum level of financial support; retain the progressive benefit structure through which low income earners receive a higher proportion of their lifetime aggregate earnings; secure aspects of the current benefit structure which address the particular financial needs of women; ensure that any change in age of eligibility includes adjustments to address the needs of those with limited or no other source of income; not adversely affect legal immigrants and refugees (Statement adopted in June 1999).

Housing, Hunger, and Homelessness

The JCPA supports legislation with adequate funding to ensure that low-income individuals and families can access safe affordable housing, and measures to provide emergency assistance to overcrowded shelters (Agenda 1999-2000). We believe every American, regardless of income, is entitled to a safe, affordable home; that no one should be reduced to hunger in order to pay for housing; that the federal government bears primary responsibility, working with state and local government, to ensure housing is available to all who need it (Statement adopted in September 1990). The JCPA believes the Food Stamps Program should be maintained and adequately funded as a federal entitlement (JPP 1995-1996).

Affordable Housing

The dignity that comes from having one's own home is an essential component of a just society. The Jewish community has a long-standing commitment to affordable housing. The Section 8 and Section 202 programs are clearly indispensable in combating the housing crisis, but they produce few new units of affordable housing. To this end, the possibility of a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund offers a policy option with a tremendous amount of potential.

The JCPA calls upon the federal government to acknowledge its fundamental responsibility to ensure that all Americans have access to safe and decent housing; create a national housing policy which addresses the need for adequate and affordable housing for all; fully fund the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program so that all eligible families can access this vital assistance; ensure that the Section 8 program remains a federal priority and does not become a block granted program; provide an increase in funding for Section 202 housing to address the rapid growth of poor and frail senior citizens who would benefit from housing; call upon Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to increase their activities and investments in affordable housing; and support the establishment of a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund to address the dearth of affordable housing, and create 1.5 million units of rental housing for the lowest income families and individuals by the end of the decade.

The community relations field should educate the public on the scope of the current housing crisis and the need for affordable housing; support local efforts to provide for affordable housing needs, including state and local housing trust funds; urge Congress to support and fully fund the Section 8 and Section 202 housing programs; additionally, urge Congress to support the establishment of a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund which would create 1.5 million units of rental housing for the lowest income families and individuals by the end of the decade; encourage Jewish individuals and institutions to join other faith communities in investing in Community Economic Development, to provide loan funds in capital-starved communities, for affordable housing; participate in faith-based coalitions that support the development of affordable housing and the prevention of homelessness; educate the Jewish community on its responsibility to ensure access to affordable housing in all geographic communities. (Resolution adopted by the 2004 Plenum)

Strengthening Families and Children

The JCPA supports increased investment at all levels of government in both financial and human resources to ensure that children and families are aware of and can access public and private services that provide quality, affordable childcare, health care, and early childhood education. We support: efforts to

improve the quality of childcare and early education programs through increased training, higher standards, and higher compensation for childcare providers; family-friendly fiscal policies, including expansion of the Dependent Care Tax Credit, which should be increased and made refundable so that the poorest families can benefit; efforts to improve the quality of childcare and early education programs through increased training, higher standards, and higher pay for childcare providers (Agenda 2000-2001).

Within the juvenile justice system, the JCPA supports efforts to shift emphasis away from incarceration toward rehabilitation; opposes efforts to weaken current law, or to include provisions that would harm children or place them at risk of assault and abuse in adult jails; advocates more funding for violence prevention and early intervention efforts and for strong gun control measures to help address the high death toll of our nation's children as a result of gun violence. (Agenda 2000-2001)

Sweatshops and Child Labor

In light of continuing sweatshop and child labor abuses, the JCPA resolves to: Encourage the use of independent third party monitoring programs by groups such as human rights and religious organizations that bring trained investigators to conduct independent and unannounced audits of factories and provide information on their findings to consumers; support initiatives to encourage manufacturers, including retailers who act as manufacturers, to take greater responsibility for contractors' violations, including overseas; commend industry programs that monitor production where independent monitors confirm that no sweatshop or child labor is being used; encourage purchase of merchandise from companies whose self-monitoring has been shown to be effective by independent companies; call upon the federal and state governments to provide adequate staffing and funding to enforce existing workers' protection statutes; encourage enactment of municipal, state, and federal statutes or ordinances that prohibit government agencies from purchasing goods made under sweatshop conditions; pledge JCPA participation and urge participation by constituent agencies in local and national coalitions to combat child labor and sweatshop abuses. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum)

The Causes and Prevention of Crime and Violence

Understanding that anti-crime legislation alone is not sufficient without commitment also to attack the underlying social ills that engender criminal activity and allow it to flourish, the JCPA supports effective crime control through legislation recognizing that prevention and early intervention are key to long term efforts to reduce crime and which balances these measures with support for improved policing techniques and strong enforcement strategies to deal with hard-core violent criminals. We support alternative drug treatment and rehabilitation programs for non-violent offenders and strengthened, expanded measures to control guns and ammunition and judicial discretion in criminal sentencing, subject to appellate review. We oppose excessive or indiscriminate use of mandatory minimum sentencing laws. In keeping with longstanding opposition to capital punishment, we oppose efforts to expand the category of crimes punishable by the death penalty and to unduly restrict a prisoner's ability to file habeas corpus petitions. We support a range of prevention measures including youth education and public awareness campaigns, and voluntary guidelines concerning depiction of violence in movies, television programming music, video and computer games. (Policy and Guidelines adopted June 1995)

Predatory Lending

The JCPA calls for efforts to educate our community members about the dangers of predatory lending; calls for passage of legislation to address the immediate home foreclosure crisis and the underlying concerns around predatory lending; urges Jewish community members to reach out to partners in their communities to address this issue; urges community members with the appropriate skills to offer pro bono assistance to victims of predatory lending who cannot afford legal counsel. (Resolution Adopted at the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

EDUCATION

Jewish Day School Education

The JCPA reaffirms the October 1999 vote of its Board of Directors endorsing the significance and value of Jewish day school education and calls for increased individual and communal support for Jewish day schools. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

The JCPA encourages its local member agencies to assist and support federations in meeting the recommendations of the UJC/JESNA report, as they deem appropriate based on individual community needs. The JCPA believes that "the responsibility for solving the crisis in Jewish education lies first and foremost within the Jewish community." The UJC/JESNA report is an invaluable tool in guiding the federation system to be an important part of strengthening all forms of Jewish education in America and the JCPA strongly supports continental and local efforts to comply with its recommendations. (Adopted at the JCPA Board of Directors, on October 18, 1999)

Public Education Policy

The JCPA remains committed to supporting, strengthening and sustaining public schools, the primary route for most children, especially poor children, into full participation in the nation's economic, political, and social life. We believe that reform of our education delivery system, including improvements in early childhood education and in programs for schools in high poverty areas requires concerted community support and that school finance equity is an essential component of excellence in public education. We support legislation to ensure that resources reach the schools that need them, to equalize education spending, restore decaying buildings, enforce higher teaching standards, reduce class size, and ensure that qualified teachers are recruited and retained for all schools. Efforts to equalize educational opportunity should include providing access at all high schools to advance placement courses designed to give students exposure to college level work, so that students applying for college admission have the same opportunity regardless of where they went to school. We support full funding for early childhood initiatives that enable children to enter school with the maximum potential to learn. (Agenda 2000-2001)

The JCPA opposes efforts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education; supports instructional programs in values education that teach such shared values as citizenship, social responsibility and mutual respect (JPP 1995-1996). We support implementation of programs that reinforce the democratic process and build support for pluralism while respecting the rich ethnic diversity of students, their respective cultures, languages and religions (JPP 1992-1993). The JCPA opposes policies that divert resources from public schools, such as voucher programs that provide public dollars to non-public schools, whether secular or sectarian; we strongly support private funding for Jewish day school education (Agenda 1999-2000).

DISSENT: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJCA) continues to favor educational choice programs.

Charter Schools

The JCPA believes properly structured and monitored charter schools may prove to be one among several effective vehicles for public education reform. However, because these schools operate free of many state regulations, effective safeguards and adequately funded monitoring procedures must be in place to protect against abuses as well as against educational failures. The JCPA will work to ensure that charter schools meet appropriate accountability and performance criteria. Among these schools should: Establish and enforce appropriate measures for regular periodic fiscal and academic assessment; comply with federal

and state anti-discrimination laws, health and safety regulations, and constitutional provisions regarding separation of church and state; be non-sectarian in program, admissions policies, employment practices and all other operations; require that teachers and students meet educational performance standards consistent with those for other public schools; incorporate adequate safeguards addressing working conditions and rights in contract and employment provisions for school employees; and provide appropriate safeguards to ensure against racial, ethnic and economic segregation and to prevent discrimination based on disability or special need. Recognizing concerns about the risk of diverting to charter schools scarce public dollars urgently needed to strengthen under-funded traditional public schools, we must work simultaneously to re-evaluate state funding formulas so local districts are not penalized when charter schools are established. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

Public School Choice

The JCPA supports “educational choice” within the public school system as one of several strategies for reform that may be effective when implemented as part of a comprehensive reform effort designed to meet the needs of varied student populations. Choice plans must be limited strictly to public schools; must not segregate or discriminate. (Statement adopted at the 1992 Plenum)

HEALTH CARE

Overview

The JCPA supports development of system-wide approaches to assuring quality, affordable health care coverage, including mental health care, for individuals and families, regardless of income; legislation to regulate managed care that assures accessible quality health care coverage consistent with JCPA Principles on National Health Care Coverage (adopted June 1993); “Return-to-Home” legislation; and legislation to prevent genetic-based insurance and employment discrimination and to ensure the confidentiality of medical records. Any restructuring of Medicare must ensure the program’s fiscal integrity and the well being of beneficiaries. Reforms must take into account the special needs of the Medicare population, including the need for coordinated, high quality care for people with chronic illness, available in all delivery settings, both managed care and fee-for-service, and the need to make prescription drug coverage more affordable. Seniors with the desire and capacity to remain in their homes should be able to do so and receive home health care under Medicare. (Agenda 2000-2001; Resolution adopted in October 1998; Resolution adopted in June 1997) Medicare and Medicaid must remain entitlement programs with adequate funding; Medicaid must remain available universally to the poor and disabled. (Agenda 1998-99)

The JCPA continues to support with ever greater vigor the JCPA’s previous resolution calling for universal access to health care, supports efforts by Sens. Hatch (R-UT) and Wyden (D-OR) to establish a Citizens Health Care Working Group to facilitate public debate and plans to improve the health care system for Americans and joins the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the California Endowment, and their national partner organizations in supporting Cover the Uninsured Week, a week-long educational and advertising campaign to bring attention to the needs of those lacking access to affordable health coverage.

The community relations field should urge Congressional representatives to support legislative efforts to enact universal health care, participate in health care community meetings sponsored by the Citizens Health Care Working Group, educate the public on the lack of affordable health coverage, especially among working families, and join local coalitions supporting and participating in Cover the Uninsured Week and other similar activities, including town hall meetings, teaching events on campus, health fairs and interfaith events. (Adopted by the 2003 Plenum).

Long Term Care and Support Services for the Elderly

The JCPA affirms its commitment to working for the development and implementation of creative national and statewide policies that provide quality, affordable long-term care services, consistent with principles of affordability, consumer choice, availability of both in-home and community-based care, and adequate caregiver support. We support: educational efforts to increase awareness by Congress and the Administration of the limitations in current national health care insurance programs, not designed to provide adequate long term care services; redesign of Medicaid and Medicare programs, through appropriate legislation, to ensure greater choice, access to information about options, and increased access to and availability of in-home and community care, strong consumer protections and public accountability for public dollars; stronger state and federal efforts to ensure promotion and availability of quality, affordable private insurance programs for young and older Americans alike; initiatives to ensure the ability of older adults to access religiously and culturally appropriate housing, home care, hospice, acute care and long-term care facilities; federal and state government support for innovative social and health service programs for the elderly, including those that integrate social services and housing for the elderly population; Increased funding of affordable housing for low and moderate-income older adults and related support services; new options for covering and containing some portion of the cost of prescription drugs; increased support for caregivers; increased funding for elder abuse investigation and services, education and outreach; full and adequate funding for services provided under the Older Americans Act; federal and state initiatives, including training and competitive salaries, to address the underlying causes of elder care staffing shortages, particularly with regard to nursing shortages. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum)

Prescription Drug Coverage

The JCPA calls upon the federal government to pass a Medicare prescription drug benefit for Medicare recipients. Legislation should assure that no Medicare recipient will be denied access to prescription drugs because of income level, provide a benefit that is affordable to everyone, comprehensive and without significant gaps in coverage, provide a benefit that is predictable and secure; and not funded at the expense of existing Medicare services and provide a benefit that is publicly administered, like the traditional fee-for-service Medicare system, and not administered through private, for-profit insurance companies.

The community relations field should educate the public on the need for prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries, urge Congressional representatives to enact legislation to provide a prescription drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries, and work with federal and state government agencies and local coalition partners to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries are aware of options for prescription drug coverage, including state and supplemental programs. (Adopted at the 2003 Plenum).

Mental Health

The JCPA supports Federal and state legislation to require parity between physical and mental health coverage by health insurance carriers, both private and public, increased funding for mental health services, as well as for mental health research and the development and testing of innovative mental health programs, greater government and community support for assistance to family caregivers who struggle to coordinate services from numerous public and private sources, state legislation to provide funding to fully implement the Olmstead Supreme Court decision to provide community based treatment for those with mental illness when placement in a less restrictive setting is appropriate, government integration and coordination of quality housing and mental health systems to provide comprehensive assistance (including access to a variety of affordable housing options from independent living

arrangements to supported or supervised arrangements), an end to unlawful workplace discrimination against those with mental illness, in fact as well as in law; government development of additional programs to aid qualified workers with mental illness in returning to the workplace, and to assist employers in working with them, mechanisms to ensure that those who are incarcerated and suffer from mental illness receive appropriate and humane treatment; placement of nonviolent, mentally ill criminal offenders in community-based mental health programs, law enforcement agency policies, practices, and specialized training to help police and corrections officers deal appropriately with individuals with mental illnesses, greater government attention to the youth within the justice system, and the need for increased funding for community-based treatment programs for this population, greater resources devoted to “problem-solving courts”, whose charge will be to holistically address the needs of mentally ill defendants, a coordinated system of care for children and teenagers with mental health problems emphasizing early recognition, prevention, and intervention, and in those states and federal jurisdictions that retain the death penalty, exclusion of people with mental illness from consideration for a death penalty sentence,

Further, the JCPA calls on Jewish communal organizations and agencies to provide health coverage for employees that guarantees parity in mental health coverage, and participate in communal efforts to destigmatize mental illness, to provide accurate information about mental health problems, improve public awareness of effective treatment, and encourage individuals to seek help. (Adopted by the Board of Directors, June 2002)

The Environment and Public Health

The JCPA urges Congress to create a Nationwide Health Tracking Network to be housed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and to give the Centers the authority necessary to establish a comprehensive, national repository of information about the incidence of disease. All feasible actions to ensure that personal health information is kept strictly confidential must be required by law and their implementation carefully monitored. Only aggregate information should be made available to individuals, communities and researchers. The Centers must also be given the mandate and necessary funds to conduct investigations of possible connections between diseases and environmental factors. (Adopted by the 2003 Plenum).

Sexual Education in Public Schools

The JCPA believes that public schools have an obligation to provide young people with accurate and effective sexuality education and, therefore, that current, ineffective abstinence-only-until-marriage sexuality programs in public schools should be replaced by comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate sexuality education that does not promote any particular religious viewpoint on sexuality. The community relations field should support legislation at the state and federal level that provides funding for, and addresses comprehensive sexuality education in the public schools, advocating to have any abstinence only programs broadened to include comprehensive sexuality education. (Resolution adopted at the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

Stem Cell and Therapeutic Cloning Research

Society today stands on the threshold of a new era in biomedical research. A debate has emerged in American society at large and among our elected leaders as to whether public policy should permit, encourage, restrict or ban the further conduct of this biomedical research. The community relations field should support: Research using embryonic stem cells including those developed through Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT); Government funding for such research; Efforts by the scientific community to develop regulations and monitor those using SCNT technology; Appropriate legislative actions consistent with the above objectives, including legislation that encourages the development of new stem cell lines in addition to the existing stem cell lines already approved for funding by the federal

government; The creation of a fully funded and empowered oversight body comprising of scientists and ethicists to monitor this research, paying special attention to ensuring that the research is restricted to stem cells of very early embryonic development, prior to implantation in a uterus. The community relations field should oppose efforts to restrict or penalize scientists, clinicians, or patients for participating in stem cell research and SCNT technology for therapeutic purposes. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Medicaid

In the 109th Congress we anticipate that there will once again be efforts to restructure and reduce funding in the Medicaid program. The JCPA takes this opportunity to reaffirm our historic commitment to the appropriate funding of Medicaid as an entitlement program and our opposition to funding Medicaid through block grants to the states.

Commensurate with JCPA's Confronting Poverty initiative, the community relations field should: Join other advocates in opposing devolving Medicaid to the states; Support the federal and state governments' obligation to assure adequate and affordable health care coverage, including prescription drug benefits, for all individuals and families, in need; Opposes efforts to cut, cap and block grant Medicaid; Oppose legislative efforts that might end the Medicaid entitlement; Encourage agencies and governmental departments to explore alternatives, which will provide needed Medicaid services more effectively. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

Racial Disparities in Healthcare

The JCPA will promote discussion and advocacy in the Jewish community with the goal of securing quality affordable coverage to uninsured families; Calls for passage of the Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act (HR 3561 and S. 1580) which addresses the crisis of racial disparities in health care; Encourages our community actively to engage coalition members to inform the community at large on the lack of affordable health coverage, especially among working families, including a disproportionate number of minority families; and, Will promote affordable health-care for each and every member of the community regardless of sex, age, race, creed or color. (Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The JCPA supports an equitable immigration policy that protects the human rights of all newcomers and the civil liberties of every U.S. resident; generous levels of refugee admissions and full funding for refugee slots, including those for Jews from the former Soviet Union; a further extension of the Lautenberg Amendment. We support full restoration of public benefits and civil liberties protections for legal immigrants, refugees and asylees. This includes initiatives to expand eligibility for SSI, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for legal immigrants who entered the country after the welfare law's enactment and the restoration of due process protections undermined by current law for legal immigrants and asylum-seekers, particularly with regard to expedited removal. (Agenda 2000-2001)

The JCPA supports an open, fair and timely naturalization process that reduces the application backlog without impeding access to those legitimately seeking to naturalize, or further restricting eligibility for citizenship (Agenda 1999-2000). While we support proposals to separate INS service and enforcement functions to improve accountability and clarity of mission, there must be strong leadership and coordination of the two functions to ensure consistent, unified immigration policy (Agenda 2000-2001).

The JCPA opposes "English-Only" initiatives, which can deny foreign-born citizens equal access to the rights of all citizens. We support increased availability of "English-as-a-second-language" and other training programs to help immigrants and refugees move into mainstream American life (JPP 1990-1991).

The JCPA supports immigration policy that retains family reunification as its basis and provides additional immigration slots for special skills (JPP 1991-1992). We support an open admissions policy that maintains the pluralistic character of American society and does not prefer one national group at the expense of another; we oppose the use of rigid caps on entry to the U.S. (JPP 1990-1991). While the JCPA supports humane measures to control illegal immigration, we oppose a national identification card system as violating privacy rights and civil liberties (JPP 1995-1996). We oppose use of employer sanctions to prevent employment of undocumented workers, believing it fosters discrimination against minorities whom employers may regard as "foreign" (JPP 1992-1993). The JCPA supports efforts to update a provision of immigration law known as "registry", which provides for administrative adjustment of immigrant status, by moving the eligibility cut-off date from 1972 to 1986, allowing immigrants who entered the U.S. prior to January 1, 1986 to become lawful permanent residents; we favor also proposals that would, over time, advance the cut-off date further, to 1990 by the year 2006 (Resolution adopted in June 2000).

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Our American-Jewish values necessitate confronting difficult immigration challenges facing our country and our community. At present, one of the most critical issues is the problem of undocumented migration to the United States. The JCPA believes that the United States should maintain support for fair and generous legal immigration policies as an expression of our country's core values of refugee protection, family reunification and economic opportunity. Unlike in previous cases where the United States government tried to curb the flow of undocumented migrants coming to the United States to find work, a Comprehensive Immigration Reform program, accompanied by a commitment to enforcement, has a great chance of being effective. Efforts to respond to the problem of undocumented migration must recognize the economic realities that underlie this flow of migrant workers, and the United States' security needs that necessitate differentiation between individuals arriving for economic opportunities and those who seek entry to threaten American lives as dangerous criminals or terrorists. Comprehensive Immigration Reform proposals should respond to this challenge in a manner that respects the human dignity and human rights of those who wish to enter. Such efforts should include programs that will simultaneously recognize economic realities and apply the labor rights and legal remedies to documented and undocumented individuals. They should also create opportunities for undocumented workers to earn legal status while providing needed labor in the United States. New legislation should aim to actually penalize the employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, rather than the current situation in which the greatest impact is jeopardizing the status of those workers. Finally, they should address the longstanding problem of unacceptable backlogs in the family reunification visa categories.

The community relations field should educate to raise awareness of current immigration policies, their consequences including humanitarian issues at the border crossings, and factors that contribute to associated risks for migrant workers; Monitor legislative proposals and advocate for Comprehensive Immigration Reform – that addresses flow across the border, earned legalization and family visa backlogs – that effectively values human dignity and allows enforcement resources to be focused on dangerous criminal or terrorist migrants; Work with interfaith and ethnic communities in coalitions to advance Comprehensive Immigration Reform; Encourage the successful acculturation of new immigrants that includes an appreciation for American democratic institutions, patriotism, and constitutional principles that we all hold dear, including equality under the law and due process; Work with the Administration and Congress to shape Comprehensive Immigration Reform. While we applaud the President's January 7, 2004 speech as it reflects the contributions of both documented and undocumented immigrants, and a

need to fix a broken system, this initial proposal falls short in helping these newcomers become fully integrated into our society; Call on the Administration, Congress, the Jewish Community and all Americans concerned about the country's future to recommit to the complex process of developing a comprehensive proposal to reform United States immigration laws that will insure that our immigration system is secure, more humane, and free from stereotyping and xenophobia. (Resolution adopted by 2004 Plenum)

Comprehensive reform of the United States immigration system is long overdue. The current morass of illegality, human suffering, and violence must be ended. There is growing recognition of the need for broad-based workable solutions and a consistent approach by the states and the federal government. Based upon American values of democracy, tolerance, entrepreneurial spirit and equality under the law and core Jewish values of human rights, human dignity and fairness.

The JCPA believes that recognizing that nations have the right and need to secure their borders and that national security is of critical importance: a) The United States has a valid national interest in promoting the rule of law, securing borders and excluding those who engage in criminal or terrorist activity; b) The U.S. should develop effective, reasonable and consistent security standards, to be applied to those wishing to enter as well as to those who are already here, whether legally or illegally; and c) The U.S. should allocate sufficient resources for the enforcement of immigration laws. Recognizing the inherent value and uniqueness of all individuals, their diverse origins, and the contributions that they can and do make to this country, many who migrate to the United States, are, for the most part: a) Hardworking and willing to endure great personal sacrifice to improve their circumstances; b) Devoted to family values, seeking to provide a better future for their children, and committed to educating their children; and c) Open and eager to embrace American culture and values, while preserving the culture and values of their countries of origin. Recognizing that the United States was founded by individuals who came here in search of religious and political freedom and economic opportunity, and based upon the ethical imperative to 'welcome the stranger,' United States policy should make every effort to: a) Institute uniform, compassionate and humane protocols and criteria to process refugee and asylum claims, so that those fleeing persecution are protected; and b) Be accessible and welcoming toward those who wish to come here to work and live.

In view of the core American principles of equality, fairness and due process of law: a) Those entering the country legally with the intention to settle here permanently should not be subject to a delayed process as a result of any administrative procedures or legislative changes; b) A rational, timely, and judicious mechanism should be developed to establish immigrants' status; c) Punitive measures that criminalize actions by immigrants, social service providers, and others--actions that would not otherwise be prohibited--are unrealistic, potentially discriminatory, and harmful to individuals and communities; d) Undocumented workers are vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace and should be afforded appropriate protection as to working conditions and standards; e) A family reunification policy should be implemented to eradicate the prolonged and inhumane separation of family members: children and parents, spouses, and siblings.

Recognizing that the United States has an interest in economic growth and revitalization: a) A rational system of immigration fosters entrepreneurship, attracts productive workers, and helps the nation maintain its competitive edge; b) When those presently undocumented become "legal," their contribution to the U.S. economy through work, paying taxes, and buying goods and services is enhanced; c) For the U.S. to remain on the cutting edge in the sciences, the humanities, and the arts, and to foster the cross-cultural exchange of ideas that enriches our society, U.S. policy should be welcoming to students, researchers, academics and artists; and d) Any changes in immigration laws must not erode the ability of American citizens to compete fairly for jobs at all skill levels. Recognizing the American commitment to

democracy and to the democratic decision-making process: a) Those individuals and groups who will be most affected by U.S. immigration policy should have an opportunity to be represented in the reform process; and b) The Jewish community should continue to work in coalitions and partnerships with these individuals and groups and should participate actively in the reform process.

The Jewish Community Relations field should work to ensure that the U.S. develops reasonable, consistent, and effective security standards that will promote U.S. national security; Participate in coalitions and partnerships with individuals and groups in the immigration reform process; Work to ensure that those entering the country legally with the intention to settle here permanently are afforded a reasonable, effective, and judicious process, and that a rational and timely mechanism be developed to establish immigrants' status; Work to develop a family reunification policy to eradicate the prolonged and inhumane separation of family members, such as children and parents, spouses, and siblings; Work to ensure that U.S. policy will grant asylum and protection to refugees and be accessible to those who need refuge from persecution; Create a high-level office within the Department of Homeland Security to oversee all issues relating to asylum and expedited removal; Allow all asylum applicants to appeal their claims to an immigration judge in order to reduce the risk that those claiming asylum are deported unjustifiably; Establish detention standards appropriate for asylum seekers and seek alternatives to detention; Promulgate regulations to promote consistent implementation of parole criteria; Eliminate the arbitrary one-year deadline for filing asylum claims; and Reject further erosions of asylees' rights in the United States.

The community relations field should follow these strategies to implement Immigration Reform: Participate in coalitions and partnerships with other community groups; Work with local, state and national legislators whenever possible; JCPA and its members should continue to work with organizations such as HIAS, AJC and others already committed to immigration reform, and engage other organizations that would potentially be interested in participating; Work with all synagogue movements and streams of Judaism; Engage in efforts and activities to combat stereotypes about immigrants; Work to ensure that employers abide by state and federal laws with respect to misclassifications of employees, workers compensation insurance, and workplace health and safety regulations. (Resolution adopted by 2007 Plenum)

Political Asylum Protection

The JCPA believes that the U.S. political asylum system is a vital source of protection for thousands of victims of persecution who turn to the United States with hope for a new and secure future, including Jewish asylum applicants from the former Soviet Union, Iran, and elsewhere, and women fleeing "honor" crimes and other gender-based violence; While homeland security concerns require the evaluation and, in some instances, modification of immigration programs, it is inappropriate to play on people's justifiable fears of terrorism to undermine important mechanisms in our country's humanitarian programs. It is particularly inappropriate to argue for dramatic restrictions on asylum on the basis of old cases in which applications were made prior to the 1995 asylum reform regulations, in which asylum was not granted, or where there is no concrete evidence of a terrorist act as proof that asylum must be dramatically restricted. In fact, U.S. law specifically prohibits a grant of asylum to anyone who has been convicted of a particularly serious crime, including any of the broad range of crimes designated as aggravated felonies under the immigration laws, and constitutes a danger to the community; has committed a serious nonpolitical crime abroad; is or may reasonably be considered to be a danger to the security of the United States; or has engaged in terrorist activity. Additionally, the Immigration and Nationality Act provides that "asylum cannot be granted until the identity of the applicant has been checked against all appropriate records or databases maintained by the Attorney General and by the Secretary of State...to determine any grounds on which the alien may be inadmissible to, or deportable from, the United States, or ineligible to apply for or be granted asylum"; Asylum seekers should continue to receive protection from the United

States, and that Congress and the Administration should work together to improve the climate for the adjudication of their claims. Specifically, the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security should provide greater protection to and access to resources for women fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, forced prostitution, honor killings, female genital mutilation, and other types of gender-based persecution. Additionally, other reforms that should receive strong consideration are proposals to eliminate the arbitrary annual caps on adjustment of status for asylees and on full asylum for victims of coercive population control; to eliminate the one year filing deadline and allow asylum claims to be judged on their merits; to provide greater access to parole for asylum seekers who can demonstrate to an Immigration Judge that they are not dangers to the community or flight risks; and to provide all applicants with full opportunities to present their claims to an Immigration Judge instead of deporting them without a hearing through the expedited removal system; Congress and the Administration should continue to seek additional legal protection mechanisms to assist vulnerable migrants – such as women and children – as has been done through the Violence Against Woman Act (VAWA).

The community relations field should work in coalitions to ensure that the public receives accurate information about both the humanitarian needs served by the U.S. refugee and asylum programs and about any possible issues for reform are fully appreciated by the public; Work to promote greater refugee or asylee protection for women, religious practitioners and other victims of violence and persecution; Oppose efforts to misrepresent the impact of the asylum system on national security as a justification for efforts to reduce protection for asylum seekers; and support the reform of any factually-supported and legitimate problems with the asylum system that are identified. (Resolution adopted by the 2005 Plenum)

INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Race and Ethnicity

The JCPA reaffirms its longstanding commitment to racial justice and equal opportunity. So long as discrimination persists, the JCPA believes that properly structured affirmative action policies that consider race as one among many relevant factors remain necessary to correct injustice. However, other comprehensive measures also are needed to increase equality of opportunity. These include strong anti-poverty programs, attention to issues of criminal justice, including an end to gratuitous racial profiling, and concerted focus on improving the quality of public education in high poverty areas (Agenda 2000-2001)

Racial Stereotypes, Epithets and Rhetoric

Recognizing that damaging racial stereotypes, epithets and rhetoric continue to plague the Native American community, perpetuating cultural bias and prejudice, the JCPA supports the battle to end the use of degrading images of Native people, their symbols, and cultural and religious traditions in the names and nicknames of sports teams, in logos, and mascots. (Resolution adopted at the 2000 Plenum)

Affirmative Action

The JCPA supports affirmative action by both government and the private sector that provide such outreach remedies as: compensatory education, training and job counseling; intensive recruitment of qualified and qualifiable individuals, using not only traditional but also public and private resources that reach members of disadvantaged groups; and ongoing review of established job and admissions requirements to assure that they are performance related and free of bias. While opposing quotas as inconsistent with principles of equality, we recognize the need for numerical data and statistical procedures to measure and help assure the effectiveness of affirmative action programs. (Policy adopted June 1973, amended in 1975 and 1981, reaffirmed April 1995)

The JCPA believes Affirmative action is an important safeguard of racial equality, and should be supported as long as race is one of many factors, quotas are not utilized, and only individuals judged to be qualified are accepted or rewarded and programs are narrowly tailored to achieve diversity; There is continued need for numerical data and statistical procedures to measure and help assure the effectiveness of affirmative action programs, so long as those data are not used to establish numerical quotas; The Supreme Court was correct in stating that “the state has a compelling interest” in ensuring diverse students bodies, using race as one factor among others in university admissions.

The community relations field should: Oppose legislative initiatives or popular referenda that seek to ban affirmative action programs that are consistent with the position previously established by JCPA; Work with broad and diverse coalitions to increase grassroots support for affirmative action programs that are consistent with the position previously established by JCPA and oppose affirmative action bans that target such programs; Continue to educate the Jewish community about affirmative action and its importance from both civil rights and Jewish values perspectives; Reassure our partners in other ethnic communities – especially the African American community and other constituencies that support affirmative action – that we favor affirmative action programs, as outlined in JCPA policy. (Resolution adopted by the 2004 Plenum)

The Census

The JCPA supports the use of statistical sampling as a reliable and legitimate means of supplementing direct enumeration in the preparation of the Census, to ensure that all segments of the American population are equally represented (Resolution adopted in October 1998). The JCPA will press for the funding needed to produce adjusted figures, using scientific sampling, for non-apportionment purposes and for changes to census law to allow the Census Bureau to prepare and use the most accurate and complete census figures for all purposes (Agenda 1999-2000).

Election Reform

The JCPA calls upon the Administration and Congress to work together to study, evaluate, and provide financial assistance to state governments to implement improvements in the nation’s elections system. Similarly, state and local governments must seek to improve the election process to insure that all votes are counted and that all persons wishing to vote are given a meaningful opportunity to do so. Toward that end, the JCPA calls for: The elimination of punch card ballot systems and other outmoded equipment and replacement with accurate, reliable, and verifiable modern equipment; federal financial assistance to states for the modernization of voting equipment; consideration of any proposal that encourages and facilitates the exercise of franchise, including but not limited to extended polling hours, recruiting additional poll workers and enhanced training and education for poll workers, use of the Internet, and/or mail-in ballots, provided that appropriate protections can be implemented to minimize the risk of fraud; adoption of uniform standards for ballots, voting procedures, registration and vote counting; development of workable mechanisms for prompt resolution of voting-day, election-related problems; review of federal legislation relating to presidential elections, particularly legislation setting deadlines for states to certify electors to qualify for "safe harbor" protection, and setting the date for electors to vote, in order to determine whether such laws remain appropriate or require modification given modern communication and travel capabilities. (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum) The JCPA supports a 1985 amendment that allows citizens of the District of Columbia voting representation in Congress. (Joint Program Plan, 1984-1985)

Transatlantic Slave Trade

The JCPA recognizes the importance of the need to acknowledge and address the barbarity of the transatlantic slave trade. We pledge to examine, with our national and local member agencies and with our coalition partners, the nature of the African American community’s concern for national and

international responses to the lingering effects of slavery and to determine how the Jewish community should respond. At the same time, we commit to working with partners to ensure that the anti-racism movement is not misused to advance an agenda that targets Israel and promotes anti-Semitism, as was the case during the UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa. (Resolution adopted at the 2002 Plenum)

African American Heritage

In light of continuing racial tension in our nation, as well as widespread societal ignorance of African-American history and culture, there is a critical need for more comprehensive presentation, preservation, and recognition of the contributions of African-Americans within American society. The JCPA resolves to support efforts to acknowledge the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of slavery in the United States; memorialize, in the nation's capital, the lives of those who suffered and perished as a consequence of slavery in the United States; and promote cultural understanding of African American heritage to further enhance social justice and racial harmony. Furthermore, it resolves to seek a greater understanding of these historical realities of American society by working in coalition with other religious, racial, and ethnic groups in supporting the establishment of memorials, museums, and monuments that promote cultural understanding, social justice, and racial harmony; and commemorate the decision of the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* by encouraging and promoting educational programs for adults and the development of a curriculum in schools, to address the issues raised in this resolution. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum)

LABOR

The Right to Form Unions and Bargain Collectively

The JCPA believes that collective bargaining is a vital public good that makes for a more just, fair, open and democratic society and workers should not be impeded in their efforts to organize. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), enacted by Congress in 1935, remains an essential cornerstone of workers rights, setting forth fair procedures for collective bargaining, prohibiting employers from discriminating against employees who take part in union or collective activities, requiring employers to bargain with the appointed representative of its employees, regulating what tactics each side may employ to further their bargaining objectives, and establishing procedural guidelines on good faith bargaining.

Therefore, the Community Relations field should work with members of the Congress so that U.S. law will allow workers to freely choose unions without interference, threats or coercion; establish strong penalties when employees' rights to organize and bargain are violated, including timely injunctive relief and meaningful monetary damages. The field should also support efforts of local unions and workers in their efforts to secure better working conditions for themselves and their co-workers, in accordance with long standing principles of Jewish community relations. (Resolution adopted at the 2004 Plenum)

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Right to Reproductive Choice

The JCPA supports a woman's legal right to reproductive choice and to adequately funded family planning programs in the U.S. and abroad. We condemn acts of violence directed at those who seek or provide these services (Agenda 2000-2001). The JCPA believes medical education, affected by controversy around this issue, is failing to provide adequate opportunity for doctors to obtain the skills needed to perform this legal medical procedure. Residency curricula in obstetrics/gynecology should make available instruction in all procedures relating to reproductive functions, whether or not the resident-in-training incorporates these procedures into the future practice of medicine (Agenda 1999-2000). We oppose statutes requiring pregnant minors to notify or obtain the consent of their parents or

obtain judicial consent or bypasses prior to obtaining an abortion; we support federal and state legislation to provide abortion funding for those unable to pay (JPP 1992-1993).

The JCPA believes that: reproductive health decisions are best made by individuals in consultation with their families and health care professionals based on personal religious beliefs; and, Restrictions on the right to choose and lack of access to services threaten this constitutionally-protected individual right.

The community relations field should: oppose any efforts to deny a woman's right to reproductive choice, including any efforts to deny access to birth control; Oppose efforts to restrict a woman's ability to access reproductive health services; and, Support efforts to safeguard *Roe v. Wade*. (Resolution adopted at the 2005 Plenum)

DISSENT: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJCA) does not, as a matter of longstanding policy, join the Jewish Council for Public Affairs Agenda discussion of "reproductive choice." We cannot endorse a public policy that does not reflect the complex response of halacha (Jewish law) to the abortion issue. In most circumstances the halacha proscribes abortion, but there are cases in which halacha permits and indeed mandates abortion. The question is a sensitive one and personal decisions in this area should be made in consultation with recognized halachic authorities.

Violence Against Women, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination

The JCPA supports reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and other measures to provide services to individuals and children affected by domestic violence, including passage and implementation of the Family Violence Option by the individual states (Agenda 2000-2001). We support policies to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and urge the adoption by member agencies and others of sexual harassment policies consistent with the JCPA Model Sexual Harassment Policy adopted in June 1992 (JPP 1992-1993). We support U.S. ratification of the U.N. Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (JPP 1996-1997).

Advancing Women's Rights

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) urges the United States to ratify the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a landmark Convention that has been ratified by 168 countries, including Israel. (Resolution Adopted in February 2002).

Human Trafficking

The JCPA believes that the demand for and apparatus that facilitates the movement of modern-day slaves around the world must be eliminated; human trafficking is a crime that harms millions of victims worldwide; and that, the public should be alerted to the risks involved with it and work with the American government and United Nations to combat trafficking.

The JCPA and its member agencies should advocate for consistent and comprehensive state and federal anti-trafficking laws that provide for criminal penalties for traffickers as well as protection and rehabilitation for victims; support President Bush's decision to raise the issue of human trafficking in the United Nations and for leaders of the world to work together to end it; support the State Department's efforts to curtail the demand for human trafficking and to work extensively with governments on action plans for prevention of human trafficking; support the State Department's efforts with Tier 2 and Tier 3 countries, and any country that demonstrates immediate and obvious violations not recognized in the previous year's TIP report; encourage local and state law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies to prosecute the traffickers and protect the victims; and, join in coalition with other groups offering advocacy and assistance to the victims of trafficking. (Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

OTHER

Civic Engagement and Volunteerism

The JCPA, recognizing the need in our nation for increased civic engagement, will encourage greater efforts, through its national and local member agencies, to engage volunteers and promote civic involvement, including direct service volunteering such as mentoring and tutoring, advocacy on issues of public policy and grass-roots community organizing (Resolution adopted at the 1999 Plenum).

Non-Profit Sector

The JCPA believes further restrictions on the advocacy role of charitable nonprofits are unnecessary and would harm the important advocacy role that nonprofits play. Existing restrictions under Section 501(c) of the IRS code allow for adequate oversight of tax exempt organizations ensuring that such activities do not extend beyond the “substantial amount” limit in current law; Additional limitations on donor-advised funds, such as increased administrative or financial requirements, or a limitation on “board-size” or governance structure, are not necessary; and that the tax code should be modified to allow more Americans to benefit from incentives for charitable contributions including deductions for non-itemizers, to remove disincentives arising from the application of the alternative minimum tax, and to add provisions to allow an individual to make donations that are not subject to income tax directly from their individual retirement accounts to a charity. (adopted 2006 Plenum).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

CORE PRINCIPLES

The organized Jewish community's agenda for environmental stewardship and justice are derived from both traditional and contemporary principles:

Stewardship

The diversity of life is sacred and should be protected because of its intrinsic value and its contributions to the well-being of humankind. Humankind's unique place in the natural order enables us to transform the natural world to pursue human development and requires us to safeguard ecological systems so that the diversity of life can thrive.

Environmental Justice

All people have the right to live, work, study, and play in environments free of dangerous air, water, or land pollution.

Responsibility to Future Generations

Humankind has a solemn obligation to future generations to live within the ecological limits of the earth.

Prevention of Harm

Regulations should cautiously and prudently err in favor of protecting human life and health.

Public Involvement in Decision-Making

All citizens have a right to be actively involved in decision-making that affects their health or the quality of their environment.

Citizens' Right to Know

Government and industry have an obligation to regularly inform the public of known and suspected dangers to their health from industrial and governmental facilities and from food, water, air, household supplies, and other consumer products.

The Common Good

Government has an obligation both to regulate the use of private property in the interest of the common good and to provide transition assistance to those who lose their livelihood due to changes in environmental policies.

Energy Independence

In order to protect American economic independence, avoid military conflict, and protect the environment and public health, the U.S. should adopt policies which wean the U.S. economy from its reliance on fossil fuels.

Equitable Distribution of Responsibility

Individuals, corporations, governments, and nations that cause pollution or the destruction of ecosystems must bear responsibility for remediation and restoration.

Governmental Compliance

Federal and state governments must be held to the same environmental standards as the private sector, except when national security unambiguously requires a strictly limited exemption.

U.S. Leadership

The United States should take a leadership role in protecting the global environment.

Moral Leadership

As environmental issues are matters of personal and societal morality and ethical responsibility, faith communities have an obligation to provide leadership regarding the necessity of protecting all creation.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE

The JCPA supports a comprehensive and precautionary approach to protecting all members of the public from environmental health threats (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Equal Protection from Pollution and Degradation

The JCPA affirms the right of all people to live and work in environments with clean air, land, water and food and calls on government to protect public health by establishing ensuring sufficient regulations and facilities to safely minimize, manage, and dispose of toxic, nuclear, and other hazardous wastes. The JCPA calls on government to ensure that all communities have equal access to environmental clean up programs and equal protection from environmental hazards and the placement of waste disposal facilities, regardless of income, race, or ethnicity (Statement adopted at the 1995 Plenum).

Product Testing and the Right to Know

The JCPA supports mandatory pre-market testing of potentially harmful commercial, industrial, and agricultural products and processes that may have the potential to harm the environment or public health before approval for production and use (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum). The JCPA supports the mandatory labeling of consumer products regarding their toxicity and the provision of information about the toxicity of the chemicals emitted by industrial and commercial facilities (Agenda 1998-1999).

Pollution Prevention

The JCPA favors measures that impose the cost of pollution remediation on polluters; provide incentives for pollution prevention; and promote the development of non-toxic alternatives to hazardous materials (Agenda 2000 – 2001).

Public Health Research

The JCPA supports the establishment of comprehensive registries for both disease and environmental exposure that will provide data for identifying environmental causes of disease. The JCPA supports funding for research into the interactions between the genetic and environmental causes of disease (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

The JCPA urges Congress to create a Nationwide Health Tracking Network to be housed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and to give the Centers the authority necessary to establish a comprehensive, national repository of information about the incidence of disease. All feasible actions to ensure that personal health information is kept strictly confidential must be required by law and their implementation carefully monitored. Only aggregate information should be made available to individuals, communities and researchers. The Centers must also be given the mandate and necessary funds to conduct investigations of possible connections between diseases and environmental factors. (Adopted by the 2003 Plenum).

Nuclear Waste

The JCPA supports the isolation of commercial and defense nuclear wastes in a manner that protects public health and the environment (Agenda 1999-2000).

Regulatory Procedures

As cost-benefit analysis cannot adequately assess the “value” or quality of life, the JCPA does not support its use as the primary tool for evaluating regulations and standards. Rather, the effectiveness of regulations for protecting the vulnerable, preventing harm, and safeguarding creation should serve as the primary evaluation criteria for regulations (Agenda 1999-2000).

The JCPA opposes routine provision of compensation for loss of profits as a consequence of environmental or other regulation. (Resolution adopted in 1995)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY POLICY

Overview

The JCPA supports the development of a comprehensive national energy policy that increases U.S. energy independence by reducing dependence upon fossil fuels – particularly oil from the Middle East – through energy efficiency and the development of environmentally clean affordable alternative energy sources and technologies (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Climate Change and Energy Independence

The community relations field should educate and advocate on the importance of climate change as an issue in environmental, religious, ethical and moral terms and lobby for the reversal by the US Government on the Kyoto Accord; Urge the Jewish community to work with those in leadership positions within their communities and in businesses to demonstrate what can be done to tackle climate change – independent of government regulation. Among the meaningful responses to this most urgent environmental challenge are: ‘Greening’ Jewish institutions in building design and operations; encouraging members of the Jewish community to make sustainable choices, such as conserve energy at home and on the road; and committing individual companies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; Participate in interfaith efforts to engage other groups outside the Jewish community to take action on climate change; and, support legislation materially similar to S2025/HR 4409, the bipartisan “Fuel Choices for American Security Act,” currently pending in Congress. (Adopted at 2006 Plenum)

Climate Change and Poverty

The JCPA believes the community relations field should, at both the state and federal level, support measures to protect vulnerable populations (at home and abroad) from environmental damage related to climate change and that limit the economic burdens of new policies on those populations (including efforts to direct revenue generated by climate change legislation toward such programs); support increased funding for programs that help vulnerable populations pay for their immediate home energy needs and reduce their energy demands; support efforts to create new jobs and job-training programs to help those who lose their jobs as a result of new environmental regulations and policies; support studies that examine the effects of climate change on vulnerable populations and facilitate implementation of emergency plans to respond to these effects; promote multilateral international cooperation to deal with this issue. (Adopted by the 2008 JCPA Plenum)

Dependence on Foreign Energy Sources

America’s increasing dependence on foreign oil for transportation, electricity, industry and other uses poses great risks for our nation and the world, specifically threats to national security, economic stability, and the health of our environment. In particular, our dependence on foreign oil enriches some countries

that are hostile to the United States and support terrorism. America's growing energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil and other fossil fuels requires prompt action and the Jewish Council of Public Affairs calls upon our government to make this issue a top national priority.

In order to achieve a substantial reduction in US dependence on imported energy sources, America must initiate a national campaign that employs creativity, collaboration, and commitment to develop a comprehensive energy plan that effectively addresses our dependence on foreign oil while taking into account the environmental, economic and other domestic needed changes.

The JCPA calls on Congress and the Administration to expeditiously address the urgent need to reduce the United States' dependence on foreign oil by developing and implementing a comprehensive, environmentally sound energy plan. The JCPA believes such a multifaceted approach should include: Supporting the modernization and expansion of America's energy infrastructure with sensitivity to our natural environment; Dramatically increasing energy efficiency and conservation; Rapidly developing, producing, and marketing renewable and alternative energy technologies; Developing and implementing environmentally responsible options to increase overall domestic energy production; Collaborate with international partners to develop global solutions; Diversifying foreign energy sources to reduce our reliance on hostile regimes; Expanding cost-efficient, energy-efficient alternatives to ensure that conservation is a viable option for all Americans; Improving mass transit options to reduce the consumption of oil by American vehicles; Supporting changes in urban and suburban communities that facilitate effective use of modes of transportation that do not consume external energy, such as cycling and walking; Offering economic and other incentives to purchase more fuel-efficient or alternatively-fueled vehicles and to rely upon public transportation; Mandating significant enhancements in fuel economy standards for all modes of transportation and improving mass transit options; Increasing public awareness through broad education campaigns; Exploring the use of nuclear energy with appropriate safeguards. (Resolution adopted by the 2007 Plenum)

Domestic Energy Production

The U.S. should not seek to increase energy independence by drilling for oil or gas in environmentally sensitive areas, particularly those that are unique natural areas or critical habitats for threatened species (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Energy Conservation and Clean Energy Technologies

The JCPA supports policies to effect the rapid adoption of clean and renewable energy sources and technologies, including solar, wind, fuel cell, and natural gas, and the phasing out of reliance on fossil fuel technologies which contribute to air pollution, respiratory illness, global warming, and the degradation of ecosystems (Agenda 2000 – 2001). The JCPA supports significant increases in vehicle fuel economy standards. The JCPA supports increased development and use of mass transit (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum). The JCPA supports keeping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve filled to capacity (JPP 1993-1994).

International Agreements on Global Climate Change

The JCPA supports U.S. leadership in global efforts to address climate change. The JCPA supports the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and urges that the U.S. and other developed nations should achieve a majority of greenhouse gas emission reductions required under international agreements through direct domestic action. International agreements addressing climate change must protect those most vulnerable: poor people, those living in coastal areas, and those relying on subsistence agriculture (Agenda 1999 – 2000).

Domestic Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

The JCPA supports the creation of mandatory domestic emissions reductions programs under the legislative authority provided by the already ratified Rio Treaty (Agenda 1999 – 2000).

Economic Displacement

The JCPA supports federal programs to provide retraining and economic transition assistance to the workers and industries most negatively affected by changes in energy policies (Agenda 1999 – 2000). Congress should generously fund the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and other programs to reduce the negative impact on poor people of energy policies that increase the cost of energy (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Market Incentives

The JCPA favors policies which provide market-based incentives to adopt clean energy technologies, including taxation of pollution (Agenda 2000 – 2001).

Utility Regulation

Changes in the regulation of utilities should be done in a manner that promotes significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions, including the elimination of subsidies to fossil fuel industries so that environmentally friendly energy production will become increasingly competitive (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Biological Diversity

The JCPA supports a comprehensive approach to preserving and restoring biological diversity at home and abroad (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Public Lands

The JCPA supports management of both public and private lands to preserve and restore biological diversity. The JCPA supports the establishment of a system of interconnected, strictly protected biological preserves on land, in fresh water, and in the sea (Agenda 2000 – 2001). Government should remove subsidies for logging, mining, or grazing on public lands, especially in old growth forests (Agenda 1999-2000). The JCPA supports generous and permanent funding for the acquisition and protection of sensitive land and water habitat (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

Endangered Species

The JCPA supports reauthorization of a strengthened Endangered Species Act – overdue for reauthorization since 1993 (Resolution adopted at the 2001 Plenum).

The JCPA supports protection of species on public and private lands based on current science, erring on the side of protecting species when scientific authorities differ. The federal government should conduct sufficient biological research to make timely decisions regarding species protection. Governments should work proactively to prevent dangerous declines in species populations and create recovery plans for all endangered and threatened species (Agenda 1999 – 2000). Government should protect and restore sufficient habitat to secure viable populations of declining species throughout their present ranges. Congress should amend the Endangered Species Act to prohibit the federal government from granting permits (“incidental take permits”) to destroy habitat that is scientifically demonstrated by peer review to be essential to the recovery of endangered species. The Administration and Congress should devise, fully fund and aggressively publicize positive incentives to encourage private property owners to protect and recover endangered and threatened species and the habitat upon which they depend (Resolution adopted at the 1997 Plenum).

INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The JCPA supports increased foreign aid for environmental protection, sustainable economic development, and family planning in developing countries. The JCPA urges the Administration to take a leadership role in ensuring that international institutions, including the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, actively work to protect the global environment (Agenda 2000 – 2001). The U.S. should actively address environmental degradation and resource shortages in regions where such developments might lead to either mass migration or armed conflict. The JCPA supports the inclusion of provisions to protect the environment in trade agreements (Agenda 1999 – 2000).

OTHER

Urban and Community Planning

The JCPA supports the provision of incentives for the revitalization of cities through environmentally responsible “Brownfields” programs. The JCPA supports land-use and transportation policies which would contain urban sprawl, promote the redevelopment of cities, and protect open spaces (Agenda 1999 – 2000).

Conservation of Natural Resources

The JCPA supports policies—based on pricing, taxation, and other incentives—that lead to the reduction of the level of U.S. per capita consumption of energy, paper, metals, and other resources. The JCPA calls on all households and communal organizations to adopt internal conservation and waste-reduction policies including recycling, the use of recycled and energy-efficient products, and the elimination of hazardous pesticides and cleaning supplies (Agenda 1999 – 2000).

Agriculture

The JCPA supports comprehensive testing of all genetically engineered products for their capacity both to disrupt ecosystems and to cause illness. The JCPA supports policies which promote sustainable agricultural practices—including soil conservation, minimized use of pesticides and fertilizers, and maintenance of the genetic diversity of food crops (Agenda 2000 – 2001). In addition, governments should protect agricultural lands and public health through programs to safeguard groundwater, regulate chemical and animal waste runoff from farms and livestock facilities, and promote organic agricultural practices (Agenda 1999 – 2000).

The JCPA calls on the Israeli government to address the rapidly deteriorating environmental conditions in Israel (Agenda 2000 – 2001).