

Sisterhood Programming and Advocacy Guide 2017

This WRJ guide is provided to help your sisterhood put the most recent resolutions into action. It includes program ideas, talking points, and advocacy suggestions to involve your members in our newest priorities for social action.

To review WRJ resolutions and statements, you can visit the [Resolutions and Statements](#) page on our website.

Resolutions and Statements Highlighted in this Guide:

- ❖ [Racial Profiling \(2017\)](#)
- ❖ [Human Trafficking \(2017\)](#)
- ❖ [Sexual Violence in Schools \(2017\)](#)

Social Justice and the Reform Movement

For more than 100 years, inspired by Jewish traditions and values, WRJ has pioneered social action in the Reform Movement and the Jewish community. From advancing women's leadership and equality in Jewish life and in society at large to championing numerous critical social justice issues, WRJ has been at the forefront of major efforts in the work of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.

- ❖ [WRJ and Social Justice](#)
- ❖ [Why Advocacy is central to Reform Judaism](#)

Review the resolutions with your sisterhood and **devote a meeting** to discussing what steps you should take to bring WRJ social justice to your community.

Monitor the [WRJ blog](#) and look out for the weekly newsletter and additional Advocacy Update emails for social action ideas and updates.

[2017 Resolution on Human Trafficking](#)

“This year we are slaves; next year, may we be free.” (Passover Haggadah)

“No one should be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all forms.” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 4)

“I had not then learned the measure of ‘man’s inhumanity to man’, nor to what limitless extent of wickedness he will go for the love of gain.” Solomon Northup, Twelve Years a Slave (1853)

The Board of Directors of Women of Reform Judaism: call on the United States Congress and Administration to work to combat human trafficking and reauthorize the 2017 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act; call upon the Canadian Parliament to enact a bill that will minimize the need for human trafficking victims to appear in court, simplify the process for seizing property of convicted human traffickers, and establish strict criminal penalties for human trafficking that are consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; call on governments world-wide to strengthen laws and policies to combat human trafficking; call on our members to advocate for local, state, provincial, or national legislation to strengthen laws and policies to combat human trafficking; call on our members to urge their elected officials to institute social protection measures, including education and skills training, to mitigate social and economic vulnerabilities that are associated with human trafficking; urge our members to create awareness campaigns and participate in coalitions and activities that seek to put an end to human trafficking and to educate themselves on the issue of human trafficking by going to sites such as the Religious Action Center; urge our members to not purchase products from companies that manufacture or import goods manufactured using convict labor, forced labor, or indentured labor.

Recommended Sisterhood Programming and Advocacy:

- ❖ **Organize an educational workshop** for your sisterhood or congregation on the issue of human trafficking. This should include basic information on the extent of the issue, statistics, and definitions, as well as tools to identify signs of trafficking and resources to prevent and respond to instances. Because young people can be particularly targeted by traffickers, consider partnering with your congregation’s youth group to open up the conversation to include addressing risk factors and prevention. You can [invite a speaker from T’ruah](#) to share more information about the current state of the issue.
- ❖ **Facilitate a screening of the documentary film *I Am Jane Doe***, which chronicles the stories of mothers fighting for their daughters who became the victims of trafficking on Backpage.com. Available on Netflix. You can find the movie discussion guide at the end of this document.
- ❖ **Advocate for legislation.** Call on your Members of Congress to reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which establishes priorities and allocates funds in the fight against human trafficking. **Run a sisterhood advocacy program or day** during which participants call their Members of Congress or write letters urging them to support the reauthorization.
- ❖ **Look into your congregation’s policy for selecting companies from whom to buy products.** Encourage congregational groups to purchase items (i.e. t-shirts, books, merchandise) from companies that use fair labor standards in an effort to be ethical consumers.
- ❖ **Provide resources to members of your sisterhood and congregation.** Send the resources (attached at the end) to your group and ensure clergy and leaders have access to relevant sources to support members in need.

Talking Points: Human Trafficking

- ❖ Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. The Jewish people have a long history of both slavery and freedom, and each year at Passover, Jews recount the story of Exodus and our ancestors' journey from bondage to redemption as a reminder to uphold the right of every individual to be free.
- ❖ Women of Reform Judaism has continuously advocated for basic human rights. In 2000, WRJ's Executive Committee expressed concern about women and children victimized by sex trafficking, both in and out of North America.
- ❖ In 2017, the United States Congress will consider reauthorizing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which will establish American priorities and allocate funds in the fight against human trafficking for the next three to five years. TVPA of 2000 (and subsequent reauthorizations) define human trafficking as including both forced labor and sex trafficking induced by or obtained through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.
- ❖ The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada introduced Bill C-38, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (exploitation and trafficking in persons) in 2017 to minimize the need for human trafficking victims to appear in court, simplify the process for seizing property of convicted human traffickers and strengthen Canada's criminal law response to trafficking. The bill, however, does not include mandatory consecutive sentencing.
- ❖ According to the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO), approximately 21 million people worldwide are victims of human trafficking, 11.4 million of whom are women and girls. One and a half million human trafficking victims are in the Developed Economies and European Union. Four and a half million people worldwide are victims of forced sexual exploitation (the remainder are victims of forced labor exploitation).
- ❖ 5.5 million children aged 17 years and younger are victims of trafficking. Fifty percent of these children are sold for sexual purposes (included forced marriages) with the other 50% sold for slave labor or organ removal. Only one in ten is rescued. The exploitation of children for prostitution, slavery, or organ removal is considered criminal among all United Nations member states.

Additional Resources and Information on Human Trafficking

- ❖ [T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights](#)
- ❖ [Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking](#)
- ❖ [U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons](#)
- ❖ [UNICEF Interfaith Toolkit to End Trafficking](#)

[2017 Resolution on Racial Profiling](#)

“There shall be one law for all of you.” Leviticus 24:22

“Do not make a mockery of justice for it is one of the . . . pillars of the world.” Talmud, Devarim Rabbah 5:1

In the tradition of WRJ's strong voice against racial discrimination and in light of overwhelming evidence that racial profiling leads to inequitable treatment of minorities and is an ineffective policing tool, we, the Board of the Women of Reform Judaism, call on our members to: become educated on the existence, harms, and inefficacy of racial profiling; support local organizations that monitor police actions and combat racial profiling; advocate for local, state, provincial, or national legislation that requires the collection of data and supports the training of police in equitable policing tactics; participate in community-based dialogues pertaining to race and community-police relations; and advocate for community policing programs.

Recommended Sisterhood Programming and Advocacy:

- ❖ **Organize a screening of the documentary film [13th](#)** (available for educational screenings on Netflix), which explores the historical racial inequality in our nation’s prison system that is disproportionately filled with African Americans.
- ❖ **If your sisterhood or congregation has a book club, read Bryan Stevenson’s book [Just Mercy](#).** Stevenson is the founder and director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit organization based in Montgomery, AL, that provides free legal assistance to individuals who have been treated unfairly by the justice system and who are unable to pay for their own legal representation. Use [the RAC’s discussion guide](#) to help facilitate conversation.
- ❖ **Plan an educational workshop** for your congregation on the history of racial profiling and the current state of disparate treatment of minorities in the legal system. Include information on types of policing and best practices. Connect with your local [NAACP \(National Association for the Advancement of Colored People\) unit](#) or [ACLU \(American Civil Liberties Union\) chapters](#) to bring in a speaker who is educated on the issue. Make sure to include impacted communities in your workshop.
- ❖ **Monitor legislation in your state and advocate** for community policing programs and law enforcement training that promotes equitable policing tactics.

Talking Points: Racial Profiling

- ❖ Racial profiling occurs when law enforcement officials target people of color for detention, interrogation and searches without evidence of criminal activity, just based on the person's perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion.
- ❖ "Stop and frisk" is a policing tactic that allows police officers to search anyone they encounter. Data shows that 85 percent of the people stopped under New York City's stop and frisk program were black or Hispanic, while they only made up 52 percent of the city's population. The program was declared unconstitutional in 2013.
- ❖ In one Midwestern city, while only 19 percent of the population was black, they were 25 times more likely to be arrested for loitering with intent to commit a narcotic offense. Black drivers were nine times more likely than white drivers to be arrested for an active driving violation during daylight hours, but only two times more likely when conditions made it difficult to identify the race of the driver.
- ❖ Racial profiling is ineffective as well as inequitable. In San Francisco, black people accounted for 15 percent of police stops but 42 percent of non-consensual searches following stops. White people were two times as likely found to be carrying contraband.
- ❖ Over the past 40 years, the American prison population has grown by 500%. Over two million Americans are currently incarcerated, and a disproportionate number are people of color. The explosion in the prison population has resulted in overcrowding, poor treatment of prisoners, and staggering costs for the public
- ❖ Racial profiling has a great impact on the prison and jail population. Roughly 12 percent of the United States population is black, yet 1 in every ten black men in his thirties is in prison or jail on any given day. American Indian youth are three times as likely as white youth to be held in a juvenile detention facility.

Additional Resources and Information on Racial Profiling

- ❖ [American Civil Liberties Union](#)
- ❖ [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#)
- ❖ [Brennan Center for Justice](#)
- ❖ [Alliance for Justice](#)
- ❖ [The Sentencing Project](#)

[2017 Resolution on Sexual Violence in Schools](#)

“All of Israel is responsible for one another.” (Shavuot 39a)

We, the Board of Women of Reform Judaism: call on our members to advocate for the protection of all students from sexual violence and for support of survivors of sexual violence in our communities; urge our members to engage in educational programming on preventing and responding to sexual violence; urge our members to advocate for education and resources that dispel myths surrounding sexual violence; call on the U.S. and Canadian governments at all levels to implement and enforce policies and legislation that strengthen the legal and academic institutional response to reports of sexual violence, to discourage the adoption of legislation that would require survivors to report to the police in order to receive assistance from their institution, and to implement oversight measures that hold academic institutions accountable for failing to respond to and thoroughly investigate reports; call on academic institutions to create and implement effective methods of response to reports of sexual violence; encourage the adoption by governments of policies that clarify the definitions of rape and consent, including clarifying the specific circumstances under which consent cannot be given; and call on the U.S. and Canadian governments to continue robust funding of programs to aid survivors of sexual violence.

Recommended Sisterhood Programming and Advocacy:

- ❖ **Organize a screening of the documentary film [The Hunting Ground](#)**, which addresses the mishandling of campus rapes by college and university administrations. Educational toolkits and resources are available on the website.
- ❖ **Organize a screening of the documentary film [Audrie & Daisy](#)**, which confronts high school sexual assaults and the social media bullying that followed. Discussion guides and recommendations for setting the tone are available on the website.
- ❖ **Check out the RAC’s [Sexual Assault Awareness Month Toolkit](#)** for definitions, tips, and more advocacy ideas. While the guide was created for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April and should certainly be used when planning a SAAM event, the elements of it can be applied any time during the year.
- ❖ **Advocate for survivors’ rights.** Monitor state and federal legislation; oppose legislation that could restrict options for survivors (like requiring college survivors to report to the police in order to receive assistance from their university) and advocate in favor of legislation that enforces victims’ rights laws (like Title IX).
- ❖ **Bring in a speaker** who can discuss their experience with sexual assault in school. Request a survivor-activist from [RAINN’s Speakers Bureau](#), or contact your local rape crisis center.
- ❖ **Provide resources** in the bathrooms, clergy offices, and youth lounge. These could include crisis hotlines (phone numbers and text lines), informational websites, or descriptions of signs of sexual assault.

Talking Points: Sexual Violence in Schools

- ❖ Women targeted by men experience sexual violence at disproportionate rates. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that 20 percent of high school girls between the ages of 14 and 17, as well as 20 percent of women undergraduates in college, are the victims of completed or attempted acts of sexual violence. However, men are affected as well. One in sixteen undergraduate men will experience sexual violence in college.
- ❖ LGBTQ students experience higher rates of sexual violence than heterosexual students. Twelve percent of transgender youth report experiencing sexual violence in K-12 settings.
- ❖ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in education. Because sexual violence perpetuates gender inequality, universities and K-12 schools have a legal obligation under Title IX to respond to reports of sexual violence.
- ❖ Survivors should be able to seek the route to justice that is best for them. This could mean the criminal justice system, but it should not have to. Many survivors do not turn to the criminal justice system because they fear retaliation or do not think they will be helped, as just 57 of 1000 reports will lead to arrest and 13 of 1000 reports will be referred to a prosecutor. Additionally, statutes of limitation put a timeline on survivors' healing and decision-making processes.
- ❖ There are a variety of misconceptions around sexual violence and consent. For example, 18 percent of college students and recent graduates believe that someone has consented to sexual activity as long as they did not say "no." Only 48 percent of women and 35 percent of men disagree with the claim that if a victim dresses or acts a certain way, it is their fault they were raped. Particularly on college campuses, rape is not perpetrated by a stranger on the street, but in fact, 90 percent of sexual assault on campuses are perpetrated by someone known to the victim. These myths can be combatted with comprehensive sexuality education that addresses sexual assault and consent.

Additional Resources and Information on Sexual Violence in Schools

- ❖ [RAC's Sexual Assault Awareness Month Action Toolkit](#)
- ❖ [End Rape on Campus](#)
- ❖ [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network](#)
- ❖ [Know Your IX](#)
- ❖ [Department of Justice: Not Alone](#)
- ❖ [PAVE](#)

I Am Jane Doe: Film Discussion Guide

50 Eggs Films - Directed by Mary Mazzio - Narrated by Jessica Chastain

Produced by Mary Mazzio & Alec Sokolow

Overview of Film

- Backpage.com, a free, classified advertisements website, is under fire for the number of girls who have been sex-trafficked through their sex ads.
- Backpage.com has 80-percent of the market for sex ads. When Craigslist shut down their adult ads section, the number of sex ads on Backpage.com increased.
- Backpage.com hired “moderators” to look for signs that ads may be for minors.
- Some groups want Backpage.com to implement an age-verification for sex ads in order to reduce the number of minors who are trafficked.
- Backpage.com has been sued many times, but continue to hide behind the Communications Decency Act of 1996, Section 230, which says that a company cannot be held responsible for the content shared by a third party. Therefore, Backpage.com cannot be held responsible for the ads a pimp may place in the sex ad section, advertising minors.
- Many folks, including members of Congress, think this is a broad interpretation of law. They believe that Backpage.com should be obligated to take steps to prevent sex trafficking from occurring on their website and have even alleged that Backpage.com plays in active role in the facilitation of trafficking of minors.
- The Seattle case, *JS v Village Voice Media Holdings, Backpage, et al* will go to trial this October.

Questions for Discussion

- Should Backpage.com be held responsible for sex trafficking that occurs because of advertisements on its website?
- What is your view on the judge’s interpretation of the ads on Backpage.com as not amounting to violent or providing opportunity for abuse? Is it possible that his view stems from being an older male?
- What should the outcome of these cases be?
- How can we take action to prevent sex trafficking?
- How can we prevent our teens from falling into the trap of sex trafficking on the internet?
- What types of programs can we run to raise awareness of the issue?
- How can we engage our youth in this conversation?