



# Advocacy Update

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July 20, 2017

Women of Reform Judaism remains highly disappointed in the [suspension of the promise for an egalitarian prayer space at the Western Wall](#) (Kotel) and the Israeli government's advancement of a [bill giving exclusive control of conversions to ultra-Orthodox rabbis](#). Since the developments were announced on Sunday, June 25th, WRJ has been hard at work with our movement partners on these issues of religious pluralism in Israel.

WRJ is committed to bringing women to Israel and visiting the Kotel to pray, openly reading from the Torah, and reciting or singing prayers. On our recent mission to Israel in May, the nearly fifty women with WRJ prayed with Women of the Wall at Rosh Chodesh Sivan - but surrounded by security and with people screaming at us. The Torah we used was snuck in after a blocked attempt to bring a scroll through the normal security entrance.

On Tuesday, July 18th, [a statement signed by WRJ was read](#) by representatives of Men of Reform Judaism and the Federation of Jewish Mens' Clubs at a reception held at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC. The two groups were in Washington for their biennial convention and took this opportunity to ensure that our concerns were voiced. You can [read coverage of the evening here](#).

Recently, Women of the Wall, a longtime partner of WRJ, [released a video](#) explaining the situation with the previously promised egalitarian prayer space. The video explains the history of the space, the situation that women face while praying at the Kotel, and how important it is to stand up for making the space accessible to all who want to pray.

The Kotel, and all of Israel, should be a place for ALL Jews. WRJ, along with all of our partners, will continue to demand action to that end.

*Blair C. Marks*  
WRJ President