



Advocacy Update

Sent August 15, 2012

Responding to Joplin Mosque Fire and Sikh Temple Shooting

In response to the tragic shooting at a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, WI and the mosque in Joplin, MO that was burned, Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, represented the Reform Movement in a press briefing with some of the nation's highest ranking religious officials. Standing together their message was clear: acts of violence fueled by ethnic hatred have no place in our society.

Help Take Dangerous High-Capacity Ammunition Off Our Streets

In a statement by Rabbi Saperstein mourning the Sikh tragedy, he noted that, "These events also serve as yet another tragic reminder of the violence wrought by guns, which are simply too easily available to those who seek to cause grievous harm." WRJ has long agreed, going back to our Gun Control Resolution in 1993. Over 32,000 Americans die each year as a result of gun violence. The 1994 Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in 2006, outlawed 19 types of high-capacity ammunition weapons. It's time to take action about gun violence once again.

Voter Information Center

As the election season goes into high gear, it is important to keep in mind our civic duty to participate in the democratic process as well as the limits imposed on non-profit organizations. The Religious Action Center's "Get Out the Vote 2012 Guide" is a critical resource for our sisterhoods and congregations, as is the Do's and Don'ts of Pulpit Politics: Rules for Nonprofits. And new from the RAC this year is the Voter Suppression Laws Resource for state by state updates and voting resources, responding to the dozens of laws and proposed legislation that would restrict voters' access to the polls. You can find all of this at the RAC's Voter Information Center.

Cases to Watch: Personhood Oklahoma v. Barber

Various U.S. states have considered legislation and ballot measures that restrict the reproductive freedoms of women. One such initiative, which was blocked by the courts in Oklahoma, would have defined a fetus as a "person". The resulting challenge, *Personhood Oklahoma v. Barber, et al.*, is headed to the Supreme Court for consideration. If the Court takes the case, it could open the door to the most significant redefinition of reproductive rights since *Roe v. Wade*. Women of Reform Judaism has consistently advocated for the right of every woman, based on her own religious and moral convictions, to make her own choices about her reproductive life. (See our 1989 Reproductive Rights resolution). WRJ will be watching this case!