



Advocacy Update

Sent June 5, 2013

Gun Violence Prevention Statement

This past weekend, the WRJ board met in New York for several days of meetings and fun. In addition to the wonderful [Centennial Symposium](#), where we heard from fascinating speakers such as Professor Jonathan Sarna, Rabbi Carole B. Balin, Dr. Pamela S. Nadell, Dr. Sylvia Barack Fishman and others, we also had time for important Departmental reports, including a report on all of the exciting [WRJ advocacy work](#) from this past year.

The meeting wasn't all focused on the past though – we also looked forward to crucial social justice topics of the upcoming year. At the forefront of our minds was gun violence prevention efforts, unfortunately made timely with the recent mass shootings and gun violence incidents. The WRJ board responded to this state of affairs by updating WRJ's [1993 Gun Control resolution](#) with a new statement that calls for legislation that would require background checks for all gun sales, make gun trafficking and straw purchasing a federal crime, and ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

Israel to Recognize Reform Rabbis

Earlier this week, we received more exciting news for religious pluralism in Israel: Religious Services Minister Naftali Bennett has announced that his ministry is going to allow non-Orthodox community rabbis to receive salaries from the state. As a change to existing regulations whereby the government has to approve all rabbinic appointees, communities will now be given the power to pick who they want to serve them, and that includes communities that choose to appoint a Reform or Conservative rabbi.

While this news is certainly exciting, the battle is far from over – we still need to make sure the plan is actually implemented, and continue to let Minister Bennett know that this issue is of key concern to the American progressive Jewish community. [Click here](#) to tell Minister Bennett that you support the rights of Reform rabbis in Israel – and [click here](#) to continue to show your support for equality at the Kotel, a [key social justice issue of concern to WRJ](#) and our affiliates around the world.