

Eight Communities with One Voice

Ohio Jewish Communities represents Ohio's Jewish federations, their partner agencies and congregations for the purpose of enhancing the Jewish community's ability to serve vital human needs. To achieve this goal, Ohio Jewish Communities secures funds, educates and maintains relationships with government officials, and encourages sound public policy.

Public Policy & Legislative Issues

Israel

Recognizing that a stronger Ohio-Israel partnership benefits both states and enhances the bi-lateral US-Israel alliance, OJC works on several fronts to build an even stronger Ohio-Israel bond.

We work with DSA, JobsOhio, and regional business development groups such as Columbus 2020, Dayton Development Coalition (and DRITA), REDI Cincinnati, and others to bring Israeli businesses and research partnerships to Ohio and vice versa, encouraging more direct trade and investment, creating and retaining jobs, and helping bridge Ohio to a 21st Century Innovation Economy. Support for Israel includes:

- fully implementing the 2014 Ohio Israel Industrial Research & Development Agreement and sustaining full funding for the Ohio-Israel Agriculture Initiative;
- supporting the State and County Treasurers' investments in Israel Bonds;
- combating the virulent and discriminatory Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) movement including passage of HB 476, which would deny state contracts to those engaged in BDS as well as federal legislation that would specifically empower states to do what the US Commerce Department now does in actively opposing the boycott through the contracts process;
- ensuring Iran does not gain nuclear capability;
- holding the Palestinian Authority and Arab states accountable for hateful rhetoric, incitement, and efforts to delegitimize Israel;
- keeping Jerusalem united under Israel sovereignty and control;
- ensuring that US military assistance to Israel, including hundreds of millions spent here in Ohio, and US-Israel military cooperation, increases; and
- facilitating meaningful relationships between Ohio public officials and policymakers and their Israeli counterparts, including facilitating aspects of trade missions to Israel such as the Negev Foundation's 2015 Ohio Legislative Trade Mission.

Holocaust Memorial and Education

History proves that Ohioans played critical roles in the lead up to World War II, the refugee crisis, the eventual Allied victory and liberation. In that vein, the Ohio Holocaust & Liberators Memorial is unique among public memorials and museums. OJC worked with Governor John R. Kasich to construct this Memorial to teach people about man's inhumanity to man; to remember the victims of the Nazi Genocide and to honor both Ohio survivors and liberators. We continue to support:

- the Governor's annual Holocaust Commemoration program held each year in conjunction with the National Days of Remembrance;
- teaching about the Holocaust; and in particular, ensuring Holocaust education as a part of Ohio's school curriculum; and
- utilizing the Memorial, other Ohio Holocaust centers, such as Cincinnati's Center for Holocaust & Humanity Education and Cleveland's Maltz Museum, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem to better educate leaders of today and of tomorrow and inspire them to action.

Services to the Elderly

Taking care of our elderly is a central Jewish value, and being prudent stewards of public monies in doing so is a core communal principle. We support programs offering a spectrum of home and community-based care for seniors to enhance and enrich their lives and help them “age in place” - PASSPORT, MyCare, transportation, assisted living, and innovative services. We also understand some will need to be cared for in an institution, and we seek to ensure our institutions can meet their needs with superior quality care. To those ends:

- we support adequate Medicaid funding for Long Term Care in order meet its charge as keep a safety net for those in need;
- Medicaid reimbursement for skilled nursing facilities (SNF) should takes into account the acuity level of each facility's residents as well as the quality of care at each facility; and
- we encourage state support – at increased levels - for populations with unique needs, including those with developmental or physical disabilities as well as the special commitment we bear for Holocaust survivors.

Education

We support a quality K-12 education at both public and chartered non-public schools. Education is a lifeline out of poverty, and as the “People of the Book” we understand how important education is in creating a future for everyone’s children. Therefore:

- we support funding for mandated administrative costs and auxiliary services;
- knowing a zip code or a parent’s income shouldn’t determine a child’s future potential or the quality of schooling they receive today, we support maximum funding and eligibility for EdChoice Scholarships and Special Needs & Autism vouchers, as well as other appropriate education options; and
- because nothing is as critical as children’s safety, we are committed to a partnership with government & law enforcement that keeps our schools secure.

Children and Family Issues

Strong, health families are essential to strong, growing, safe communities. Meeting issues before they become a full-blown crisis is both appropriate and fiscally prudent. To ensure our agencies abilities to meet these needs, we favor:

- adequately funding developmental disability programs, mental health services, domestic violence prevention, school-based services for youth at risk, job training and career placement, including for special populations most in need;
- ensuring Medicare and Medicaid remain responsible for those in need;
- maintaining, or increasing critical emergency programs like SNAP, aging assistance, and shelter needs; and
- Behavioral Health reimbursement must appropriately target special populations such as children with psychiatric needs and the needs of those with autism.

Refugees

As a community, we recognize the special obligation to assist refugees fleeing persecution, and we have experience in making such émigrés feel welcome and to succeed here both during the post WWII wave of refugees and the second 1990s era wave following the collapse of the Soviet Union. We believe Ohio should ensure the acculturation of these refugees. We support:

- access to interpreters for healthcare, education opportunities, citizenship preparation, and job training & placement.

Terrorism & Homeland Security

Not one public dollar should support terrorist groups or state sponsors of terror. Therefore:

- Ohio's Pension Funds should continue to uphold their commitments to divest from, and not invest in, energy sector stocks of companies doing business in Iran or Sudan;
- Federal & State agencies must partner with the faith-based sector to root out terror, to combat extremism, and keep our communities safe;
- faith-based & nonprofit sectors deserve special emphasis in outreach, training, and grant funding; and
- it is imperative for increased federal and state funding to help secure at-risk Jewish institutions, including schools, community centers, and houses of worship.

Nonprofit Tax Issues

The ability of nonprofit agencies to adequately raise philanthropic donors to accomplish their mission is vital, all the more so for those that partner with government on an array of programs. To help them meet the needs of others:

- we support increasing – and making permanent (as with current allowances for) the IRA Charitable Rollover;
- we support our agencies pursuing legislation to provide sales tax exemptions to community centers with fitness facilities; and
- we are working to ensure tax credits for community foundations will include faith-based foundations.

School Prayer

We recognize the line often walked by government and public agencies, such as schools, in accommodating religious needs or requests, prayer opportunities, and religious observances. We also recognize our community benefits – as do all minority faiths – from a robust First Amendment. As such:

- we support the status quo in public schools by opposing any legislation permitting government-sanctioned prayer.

Find your State Representative and Senator: <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/>

Find your US Senator or US Representative: <http://www.senate.gov/states/OH/intro.htm>; <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

THE WORK OF OHIO'S JEWISH FEDERATIONS

The eight Jewish Federations in Ohio, our observer organizations, and individual institutions support more than 50 major Ohio agencies annually and serve tens of thousands of Ohioans of all faiths (or none at all). This work centers around supporting:

- Rescue, relief, resettlement, social welfare and health care programs for the needy in Israel, for Jews in some 50 countries, and supporting these services through local programs in Ohio for Jewish refugees
- Health, education, and social welfare services throughout their communities
- Programs that: care for the aged; provide employment and career counseling; care for abused, neglected and special needs children; provide subsidized child care and day camp programs
- Building bridges among Ohio's religious and ethnic communities through the Jewish Community Relations Councils (CRCs)
- The work of the Federations' CRCs to protect Jewish security by focusing on threats to the safety and viability of Israel; threats to the American democratic process, specifically civil liberties, civil rights, and the separation of church and state; and actions in society that undermine the values of compassion and justice.

State Capitol Leadership Circle

Akron

Joe Kanfer
Gary Rosen
Irv Sugerman

Cincinnati

Michael Oestreicher
Penny Pensak
Steve Rosedale
Richard A. Weiland*

Cleveland

James M. Friedman
Robert Goldberg
Anita Gray
Harley I. Gross
J. David Heller*
Allan Krulak
Alan Melamed
Warren Wolfson
Timothy Wuliger
William R. Joseph (OBM)

Columbus

Michael Broidy
Jon Diamond
Nelson Genshaft
DeeDee Glimcher
N. Victor Goodman
Hon. David Goodman
Bradley R. Kastan
Bonnie Milenthal
Steve Schottenstein

Dayton

Rick Carne
Larry Klaben
Joan Knoll

Toledo

Scott Rothstein

Youngstown

James L. Pazol
Richard Sokolov
Susan Sokolov
Bruce J. Zoldan

*Co-Chairs

Officers and Board 2016-2017

Martin H. Belsky, Akron	President
Rick Carne, Dayton	Vice President
Judith Brachman, Columbus	Treasurer/Secretary
Beth Wain Brandon, Cleveland	Immediate Past President
Robert Friedman, Canton	
John Youkilis, Cincinnati	
Elliot Feit, Toledo	
Andy Moyer, Youngstown	

Staff

Howie Beigelman, Executive Director & Executive Vice President of the Board

Catherine Scheller, Legislative & Communications Assistant

Member Organizations

Jewish Community Board of Akron	Jewish Federation of Columbus
Canton Jewish Community Federation	Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton
Jewish Federation of Cincinnati	Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo
Jewish Federation of Cleveland	Youngstown Area Jewish Federation

Observer Organizations

Agudath Israel of America, Commission on Legislation & Civic Action, Ohio Region
American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)
American Jewish Committee, Cleveland & Cincinnati Chapters
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Hadassah
Israel Bonds
Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA)
Jewish National Fund, Cleveland & Cincinnati
NA'AMAT USA
National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
Negev Foundation
Union for Reform Judaism
Orthodox Union/OU Advocacy Center (OU)
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
ORT America

Affiliated Communities

Beth Israel Synagogue, Hamilton
Emanuel Jacob Congregation, Mansfield
Temple Sholom, Springfield
Knesseth Israel Temple, Wooster