

New York Rabbis in Support of the Right to Know Act

June 9th, 2015

Dear New York City Council,

During the past year, young people of color across our nation have forced society to again face what has been true for hundreds of years: **systemic racism in policing institutions is a life or death issue for communities of color**. As faith leaders, our most basic commitment is to deeply value human life. Ensuring that police treat communities of color with respect and transparency upholds the basic human right all people have to live a dignified life. The everyday encounters that civilians have with the police are among the most frequent and fundamental opportunities to ensure this commitment is upheld.

We join together as a united *kehillah* (community), in partnership with community organizations, New Yorkers and all people committed to justice, to strongly urge the New York City Council to pass the **Right to Know Act** legislative package that includes Intro. 182 ("the ID Bill") and Intro. 541 ("the Consent to Search Bill"). The Right to Know Act puts in place basic parameters for police-community interactions that will ensure accountable, transparent encounters in the face of a significant power imbalance between police officers and civilians.

The Right to Know Act reflects our profound commitment to create a city that values and respects the lives and rights of all New Yorkers, particularly those disproportionately affected by discriminatory and abusive policing. Our Jewish community recently ended the period of "counting the Omer," a tradition of counting the days between the holidays of Passover and Shavuot. This ritual of remembrance marks our ancestors' time in the desert between their exodus from slavery and receiving the Torah as a community. It is a period which signifies a transition from bondage to true liberation, from fear to confidence, and from the narrow confines of Mitzrayim to the desert expanse and the mountain of divine encounter. The journey is long and broad, but we take it one step at a time, one day at a time. We count each day and make each day count.

We, as a city, have a chance to make these days count not only in a religious and spiritual sense, but through our political beliefs and values.

We are greatly encouraged by the leadership of Council Members who have signed on as sponsors of the Right to Know Act. We look forward to the entire New York City Council making this Spring a

time of possibility and renewal by passing the Right to Know Act and helping create a better city for all who live here.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Rebecca W. Sirbu, Director of Rabbis Without Borders for CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

Rabbi Irwin Kula

Rabbi Shai Held

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah

Rabbi Dov Linzer, YCT Rabbinical School

Rabbi David Rosenn, New Israel Fund

Rabbi Michael Paley

Rabbi Felicia Sol, B'nai Jeshurun

Rabbi Roly Matalon, B'nai Jeshurun

Rabbi Marcelo Bronstein, B'nai Jeshurun

Rabbi Stephanie Ruskay, AVODAH and JOIN

Rabbi Judith Lewis

Rabbi Jason Rubenstein, Dean of Students, Yeshivat Hadar

Rabbi Linda Shriner-Cahn, Congregation Tehillah

Rabbi Jennie Rosenn, HIAS

Rabbi Ellen Lippmann, Kolot Chayeinu

Rabbi Robyn Fryer Bodzin, Israel Center of Conservative Judaism

Rabbi Sharon Ballan, Temple Beth Shalom, Flushing

Rabbi Manes Kogan, Hillcrest Jewish Center

Rabbi Mark Kaiserman, The Reform Temple of Forest Hills

Rabbi Daniel Kirzane, Associate Rabbi Beth Havorim Shir Shalom

Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky, Ansche Chesed

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, T'ruah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, T'ruah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Rabbi Lev Nelson, T'ruah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Rabbi Marc Margolius, West End Synagogue

Rabbi Dina Rosenberg, Bay Ridge Jewish Center

Rabbi Jo Hirschmann, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Rabbi Avi Kilip

Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky, JTS

Rabbi Bonnie Steinberg

Rabbi Dr. Barat Ellman

Rabbi Rachel Weiss, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah

Rabbi David Dunn Bauer, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah

Rabbi Seth Wax, Congregation Mount Sinai, Brooklyn

Rabbi Marc Katz, Associate Rabbi, Congregation Beith Elohim

Rabbi Guy Austrian, Fort Tryon Jewish Center

Rabbi Chava Koster, B'nai Israel, The Village Temple

Rabbi Ayelet Cohen, The Center for Jewish Living, The David H. Sonabend Center for Israel

Rabbi Rachel Grant-Meyer

Rabbi David Ingber, Founder and Spiritual Director, Romemu: Judaism for Body, Mind and Spirit

Rabbi Nancy Wiener, Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion

Rabbi Megan Goldman, Columbia/Barnard Hillel

Rabbi Jessica Minnen

Rabbi Zach Fredman, The New Shul, Manhattan

Rabbi Brian Fink, Engage Jewish Service Corps, JCC Manhattan

Rabbi Yael Hammerman, Ansche Chesed

Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Executive Director Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition

Rabbi Andy Shugerman

Rabbi Josh Weinberg

Rabbi Renni S. Altman, HUC-JIR

Rabbi Jeffrey Marker
Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillip

Institutions listed for identification purposes only.