



**JUDEA REFORM CONGREGATION PUBLIC POLICY POSITION:
AGAINST NC CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO REQUIRE VOTER IDENTIFICATION**
August 14, 2018

WHEREAS, Judaism teaches respect for the fundamental rights of others as each person's duty to God: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor" (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a). In the Jewish tradition, equality is based on the concept that we are all "created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). From that flows the biblical injunction, "You shall have one law for the stranger and the citizen alike: for I Adonai am your God" (Leviticus 24:22). And,

WHEREAS, the ongoing struggle for civil rights seeks to achieve equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. And,

WHEREAS, the Reform Jewish movement and its members have actively fought for civil rights in the United States. Those rights, guaranteed by the 13th, 14th, and 26th amendments to the Constitution, refer broadly to all those rights that allow a citizen to fully participate in civil society. And,

WHEREAS, in person voter fraud is not and has not been a problem or threat to voting in our state - in fact, as of 2016, the state of North Carolina has "failed to identify even a single individual who has ever been charged with committing in-person voter fraud in North Carolina." But it did find that there was evidence of fraud in absentee voting by mail, a method used disproportionately by white voters. The Legislature, however, exempted absentee voting from the photo ID requirement. (Fourth Circuit Court, July 2016) And,

WHEREAS, the 2013 state law requiring voter ID for in-person voting prevented over 1,400 citizens from voting in the March 2016 primary ([Amicus Brief, May 2016](#)) as it disproportionately affected African-Americans by excluding "as acceptable identification all forms of state-issued ID disproportionately held by African Americans." (Fourth Circuit Court, July 2016) And,

WHEREAS, in 2016 the federal appeals court struck down North Carolina's 2013 NC voting law because it violated the constitutional rights of North Carolina citizens, citing its effort to "target African-Americans with almost surgical precision." (Fourth Circuit Court, July 2016) And,

WHEREAS, The NC General Assembly is again proposing requirement of photo ID to vote; this time through an amendment to the state constitution; And,

WHEREAS, 381,000 eligible NC voters (5.6%) -- primarily seniors, youth, low income, people of color, people with disabilities -- do not have photo ID (YCV). And,

WHEREAS, There is no plan to give free ID to voters (YCV). And,

WHEREAS, Because neither the types of photo ID that would be allowed nor exceptions to the law will be decided until AFTER this is voted on, politicians would be able to once again make voting unnecessarily difficult for people throughout North Carolina, especially senior citizens, students and voters of color. And,

WHEREAS, It is wrong and dangerous to enable voter suppression and discrimination through our state's Constitution; and as North Carolina Jews, we have a responsibility to engage with our wider community to ensure that access to the vote is a reality for all citizens of our state to vote. Rabbi Eliezer taught, "...even as one looks out for his own rights, so should he look out for his fellow's rights." (Pirke Avot Chapter 2).

THEREFORE, We, the Board of Trustees of Judea Reform Congregation, OPPOSE a constitutional amendment requiring voters to present unspecified identification to exercise their constitutional right to vote in the state of North Carolina.

Resources Cited:

Jewish and Reform Judaism views on rights and civil rights:

- **Pirke Avot**, Chapter 2
- Jewish Views of Civil Rights, Reform Judaism; <https://reformjudaism.org/jewish-views-civil-rights>

2013 Voter ID Law and its unconstitutionality:

- [Fourth Circuit Court, July 2016 https://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/Opinions/Published/161468.P.pdf](https://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/Opinions/Published/161468.P.pdf)
- [Amicus Brief, RECORD NO. 16-1468\(L\). May 2016;](https://democracync.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/May-2016-Amicus-Brief.pdf)
- [https://democracync.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/May-2016-Amicus-Brief.pdf](https://www.journalnow.com/news/elections/federal-appeals-court-strikes-down-n-c-s-voter-id/article_67e3cd67-556f-5a28-8a60-38fd481foafo.html)
- https://www.journalnow.com/news/elections/federal-appeals-court-strikes-down-n-c-s-voter-id/article_67e3cd67-556f-5a28-8a60-38fd481foafo.html

2018 Proposed Amendment Issues

- [Constitutional Amendments Proposed by Legislature Voters will choose either "FOR" or "AGAINST" , YouCanVote](https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/youcanvote/pages/3536/attachments/original/1530796007/Amendments_on_the_Ballot_%282%29.pdf?1530796007)
https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/youcanvote/pages/3536/attachments/original/1530796007/Amendments_on_the_Ballot_%282%29.pdf?1530796007
- [NC lawmakers want 6 constitutional amendments. Here's what they would do;](https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article213786724.html) News and Observer, June 25, 2018. <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article213786724.html>

Passed by the Judea Reform Congregation's Board of Trustees on August 14, 2018.