

June 14, 2019 /11 Sivan 5779

Dear chevreh,

I traveled with a bus full of people from Bucks County (and NJ) to Harrisburg this past Wednesday with the POWER Bucks County group, an interfaith racial and economic justice group.

1,000 people from all over Pennsylvania came to fight the inequity in funding for public education. The primary goal is to change the law to ensure that 100% of state public education funds are distributed through the Fair Funding Formula which could help close the gap between white students and students of color in the Commonwealth. This effort began in Philadelphia and was supported by POWER groups across the state. [Bucks County has yet to identify the particular issue on which we will direct our energies.]

The reason POWER Philadelphia identified this issue a few years ago is that in 2015 it was found that Pennsylvania's state and local per-pupil spending in its poorest school districts was 33 percent lower than per-pupil spending in the state's most affluent school districts, the highest differential in the country by far.* And this has created a racial gap, giving white students better educational opportunities than children of color.

As an interfaith racial and economic justice organization, POWER stepped in. If we take to heart the Jewish teaching that all human beings are created in G-d's image and are G-d's children, why do we allow some children to receive significantly less opportunity than others?

I participated in a "pray-in" with several other clergy of various denominations in Speaker of the House Mike Turzai's office. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, Representative Turzai did not want to pray with us and the capitol police were called. We left his office peacefully and rallied outside his office. It was powerful to be with a diversity of people of different faiths and no faith who came together for the sake of Pennsylvania's children and equality.

The next POWER Bucks meeting will be on June 27th at Kol Emet at 6:30 pm. I encourage you to attend. Below is some coverage of the event in Harrisburg.

May we through our actions, work toward justice and arrive to a day when all children, regardless of color of skin, zip code or neighborhood, will be supported to grow into their highest potential.

I look forward to seeing you this evening at services at 7:30 pm (potluck at 6:15!) and next Shabbat at 7:00 pm where the Little Shul by the River Band will be playing.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Diana

<https://thenotebook.org/articles/2019/06/14/more-than-a-thousand-people-rally-in-harrisburg-for-fair-school-funding/>

https://www.abc27.com/news/local/capitol-rally-seeks-to-improve-public-education-funding/2072307516?fbclid=IwAR0nMVnOISj_t_a_-9fuYpdb0v1A083-3WwIDpi_5anENaGi4iF-kxyOcVvg

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/03/12/in-23-states-richer-school-districts-get-more-local-funding-than-poorer-districts>