

RESOLUTION ON CIVIL MARRIAGE EQUALITY
Social Action Proposal to Congregation Beth Israel Board of Directors,
February 2012

Consistent with our Jewish commitment to the fundamental principle that we are all created, *b'tzelem elohim*, in the Divine Image, the Reform Movement has been in the vanguard of the support for the full recognition of equality for lesbians and gays in society.

This support has been articulated in various resolutions since 1977. In 1993, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, since renamed Union for Reform Judaism, ("URJ") observed that "committed lesbian and gay couples are denied the benefits routinely accorded to married heterosexual couples" and resolved that full equality under the law for lesbian and gay people requires legal recognition of same-sex relationships. A 1997 UAHJ (URJ) resolution supported secular efforts to promote legislation which would provide through civil marriage equal opportunity for gay men and lesbians.

Congregation Beth Israel has for many years welcomed individuals and families into synagogue membership regardless of sexual orientation.

The bylaws of Congregation Beth Israel, for the purpose of membership, does not make any gender distinctions; a family is defined as "one or two adults, one of whom is Jewish, who define themselves as a family, and any dependent children of such adults."

In light of this background,

WHEREAS justice and human dignity are cherished Jewish values, and

WHEREAS Congregation Beth Israel opposes discrimination against all individuals,

BE IT RESOLVED that Congregation Beth Israel supports the right of same-sex couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congregation Beth Israel opposes governmental efforts to ban same-sex marriage, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this is a matter of civil law, and is separate from the question of rabbinic officiation at same-sex marriages.