

## **Promoting Equal Employment and Leadership Opportunities for Lesbians and Gays in the Reform Movement**

Adopted by the General Assembly November 30 – December 3, 1995 Atlanta

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**Background** Among our most sacred Jewish values is the fundamental principle that we are created in the image of the divine. All Jews, whatever their sexual orientation, are welcome in the Reform Movement.

Regardless of context, discrimination arising from apathy, insensitivity, ignorance, fear, or hatred is inconsistent with that principle and is morally wrong. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is abhorrent.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is justly proud of its strong record in working to eliminate invidious discrimination in our society and is fiercely committed to continuing this effort. For example, in 1993 the UAHC resolved to oppose all anti-gay state ballot initiatives, and in certain circumstances boycott any community with such laws.

Within the Reform Movement, substantial progress has been made in demonstrating our commitment to equal opportunity regardless of sexual orientation. The UAHC has admitted and welcomed a number of congregations with a special outreach to lesbian, gay and bisexual Jews.

In 1987, the UAHC adopted a resolution that sexual orientation should not be a consideration for membership of, or participation in the activities of, any member congregation. This resolution urged its congregations and affiliates “to encourage lesbian and gay Jews to share and participate in the worship, leadership and general congregational life of all synagogues and to employ people without regard to sexual orientation.”

In 1989, the UAHC reaffirmed its commitment to promoting full congregational membership opportunities for gay and lesbian Jews, as singles, couples, and families.

In 1990, the Central Conference of American Rabbis has affirmed that all graduates of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) will be admitted for membership regardless of sexual orientation.

In 1993, the UAHC called upon its congregations, the CCAR, and the HUC-JIR to extend the same benefits that are offered to the spouses of married staff members and employees to the partners of all staff members and employees living in committed lesbian and gay partnerships.

It is now appropriate to build upon this progress in support for our commitment to equal opportunities to all Reform Jews, and to enhance our efforts to promote equal employment and leadership opportunities within the UAHC, its affiliates and its congregations.

**THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves:**

- 1. Not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in matters relating to the employment of rabbis, cantors, educators, executives, administrators or other staff, or in matters relating to the appointment of lay leaders and to call upon all affiliates and member congregations to follow the same policy;**
- 2. To call upon all placement arms of the Reform movement to assist congregations in implementing this policy of non-discrimination;**
- 3. To call upon all organizations affiliated with the Reform movement to adopt written policies of non-discrimination; and**
- 4. To commend the use of Kulanu—A Program to Include Lesbian and Gay Jews in Our Temples, a manual being published by the Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Inclusion, in conducting educational and other programs for the purpose of implementing this and previous related resolutions.**

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