



**Resolution to Affirm NFTY's Stance on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Peoples**

Submitted to the NFTY General Board at Mechina 5776

June 20, 2016

**Background:** Over the past few months, Transgender rights has come to the forefront of the political scene in the form of discriminatory "Bathroom Laws." Since its beginning, the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) has advocated for the full equality and inclusion of Transgender, and gender nonconforming people. The URJ has put a large emphasis on LGBT+ equality through advocating for many social issues, such as the inclusion of gays and lesbians in the rabbinate and cantorate, the legalization of same-sex marriage, and elimination of discrimination from the workplace, armed forces, and groups such as Boy Scouts.

"Transgender" is a term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Gender non-conforming is a term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

For more than 50 years, the URJ and other Reform Jewish organizations have taken or affirmed their stances on LGBT rights, discrimination, and inclusion of transgender and non conforming people. The Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) called for the decriminalization of homosexuality in their 1965 resolution. Both the URJ and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) passed a progressive resolution in 1977 "affirming the rights of homosexuals." In addition, the CCAR was the first major group of North American Clergy to pass a resolution about the performance of same-sex marriage ceremonies. They passed the "Resolution on Same Gender Officiation," in 2000 which allows and supports individual ceremonies to decide to officiate, or not officiate at wedding ceremonies of same-gender couples.

NFTY, the CCAR, and the RAC's Commission on Social Action (CSA) have all previously adopted legislation condemning the discriminatory practices and atmosphere of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The CSA gained nationwide attention after contacting synagogues and parents urging them to withdraw their membership and sponsorship of the BSA.

**WHEREAS**, Deuteronomy 7:9 states that "The community of Israel is that which keeps the covenant and the kindness;" and,

**WHEREAS**, NFTY's mission statement proclaims that "NFTY is a movement that builds strong, welcoming, inspired communities..." and,

**WHEREAS**, NFTY is a Jewish organization founded on 13 principles; and,



**WHEREAS**, One of these principles is Justice, *Tzedek*: the obligation to work for justice for all, and,

**WHEREAS**, One of these principles is Community, *Kehillah*: the need for community to provide an outlet for the individual needs of all Jews; and,

**WHEREAS**, The “Resolution on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People,” unanimously passed at the 2015 URJ Biennial stated that (among other points), the Union for Reform Judaism:

Affirms its commitment to the full equality, inclusion and acceptance of people of all gender identities and gender expressions;

Encourages Reform congregations, congregants, clergy, camps, institutions and affiliates, including NFTY, to continue to advocate for the rights of people of all gender identities and gender expressions;

Urges the adoption and implementation of legislation and policies that prevent discrimination based on gender identity and expression, and that require individuals to be treated equally under the law as the gender by which they identify;

Calls on the U.S. and Canadian governments at all levels to review and revise all laws and policies to ensure full equality and protections for people of all gender identities and expressions; and,

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina governor, Pat McCrory enacted House Bill 2 (HB-2) into law which undermines the right for people to use the restroom that correlates with their gender identity and forces them to use the restroom that correlates with the gender assigned at birth; and,

**WHEREAS**, States such as Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi are looking to adopt legislation that has similar objectives as North Carolina’s HB-2; and,

**WHEREAS**, NFTY-SAR and NFTY-MAR, the two NFTY regions that encompass North Carolina, have already taken action and passed legislation that denounces HB-2 and promotes non-discrimination in North Carolina; and,

**WHEREAS**, NFTY recognizes that gender is a spectrum that encompasses more than just male or female identities; and,

**WHEREAS**, People should be able to use the bathroom that correlates with their gender identity; and,



**WHEREAS**, the simple act of recognizing the preferred gender identity of a transgendered or non-gender-binary person is a major step towards making all people feel included in our Reform Jewish community; and,

**WHEREAS**, at NFTY Mechina 5775 a resolution was passed to include a space on nametags at North American events so participants could write their gender pronouns; and,

**WHEREAS**, the 2014--2015 NFTY action theme was “Shivyon-: NFTY Addresses Gender and Sexuality Equality” inspired us to recognize the need to be leaders in this effort in creating an inclusive environment.

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED** that NFTY affirms our movements commitment to the equality, inclusion, and wholehearted acceptance of all gender identities and gender expressions; and,

**AND LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED** that NFTY will compose and send a letter to legislatures that are facing similar legislation as the HB-2 law throughout North America condemning the discriminatory nature of the proposed legislation; and,

**AND LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED** that NFTY on a regional and North American level will be encouraged to evaluate their inclusion strategies, and, if necessary, adapt new measures including, but not limited to, the creation of gender neutral bathrooms, adopting gender neutral pronouns in services and prayer books, compose similar legislation, and provide a space for participants to write their gender pronouns on their nametags.

**AND LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED** that before NFTY Convention 2017, the 19 regions of NFTY are encouraged to address this issue in a way that is most relevant and beneficial to their regions which could include, but is not limited to, starting a dialogue amongst the region, regional programming, services, and advocacy projects.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Respectfully Cosigned,

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## Appendix A: Reform Movement Past Resolutions

### **CCAR**

Resolution on Rights of Homosexuals (1977)  
Resolution On Convening in States Denying Legal Protection of Civil Rights for Gays and Lesbians (1993)  
Resolution on Gay and Lesbian Marriage (1996)  
Resolution in Support of Marriage Ruling; Opposes Efforts to Undermine Equality for Same-Sex Couples (2004)

### **URJ**

Resolution on Support for Inclusion of Lesbian and Gay Jews (1987)  
Resolution on Gay and Lesbian Jews (1989)  
Resolution on Recognition for Lesbian and Gay Partnerships (1993)  
Resolution Promoting Equal Employment and Leadership Opportunities for Lesbians and Gays in the Reform Movement (1995)  
Resolution on Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian Jewish Couples (1997)  
Resolution on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People (2015)

### **WRJ**

Resolution on Gay and Lesbian Rights (1997)  
Resolution on Transgender and Bisexual Rights (2003)