



REFORM JEWISH VOICE
OF NEW YORK STATE

UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM
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Did you know? [RJV is still accepting nominations for our steering committee!](#)

Looking Forward Toward Equality

It has been a long hard road that has brought us to this point and we continue to battle for Marriage Equality in our state. Over the next few month there are a number of ways to get involved with the fight for equality, even though we do not expect to see much legislative action on the issue.

Rally for

Marriage Equality

Learn the facts. Take a stand.

The Westchester faith community stands in solidarity. Marriage rights for all.



Date
Sunday, June 13, 2010

Time
Noon - 3 p.m.

Place
Temple Israel of
New Rochelle
1000 Pinebrook Blvd
New Rochelle, NY

Come hear:

Inspirational
Speakers
&
Heartfelt Stories

Enjoy a fun afternoon
with Food & Music



Sponsored by the many faith-based organizations of Westchester County which support marriage equality for all. For more information, call 914-235-1800 or write to Kulanu@tinr.org

Here are four ways to work for equal rights in New York State:

1. Write to your Assembly Member and Senator and remind them that equality is religious value.
2. Join activists from across the state on June 13th at Temple Israel of New Rochelle for a day of action for Marriage Equality (see flyer below).
3. Take Action with Empire State Pride Agenda in their major campaign. ([Read more here](#))
4. Encourage members of your community to [join the RJV list-serve](#).

Finally, stay tuned for an important update to the RJV campaign to bring Marriage Equality to our state in the coming months.

SAVE THE DATE

"And Justice For ALL - A Reform Jewish Voice Advocacy Shabbat" was a great success in 5770!

Mark your calendars now for 5771: Reform Jewish Voice will partner with synagogues throughout the state during the weekend of **October 22-24, 2010** to educate congregants on the pursuit of social justice in our state's capital. Please contact our Co-chairs [Rabbi Marc Gruber](#) or [Honey Heller](#) with any questions.

RJV Joint Advocacy Day with Interfaith Impact NYS a Success!

Participants in Reform Jewish Voice Advocacy Day were invigorated by the incredible experience. Our expert-led conference calls on Marriage Equality, the Reproductive Health Act, Economic Justice and Good and Ethical Government ensured that we were well prepared for our numerous meetings with legislators. We walked away feeling that we made an impact on our elected officials. Many of us were so enthused that we will continue to follow-up on these issues with additional visits to our legislators in their local offices.

The following statement was composed by Steven Schnur, a participant in Advocacy Day from Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale:

Enshrined in the first amendment to our Constitution alongside our three most vigorously defended safeguards-- freedom of religion, speech, and assembly-- is the right of all citizens "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." At a forty-year remove from my high school civics class, I recently needed to be reminded what exactly James Madison meant by the "right to petition," and turned to my daughter, a legislative assistant at the Religious Action Center in the nation's capital, for both an explanation and an object lesson in the modern exercise of political petition. She reminded me that in its simplest form, the right to petition is the act of lobbying one's elected representatives in an effort to promote or defeat pending legislation or to alter existing laws. One might do this through letters or telephone calls to legislators, or through face-to-face meetings. Taking this lesson one step further, she invited her parents to join her and several dozen Reform Jews for a day of lobbying in the state capital

under the auspices of the Reform Jewish Voice of New York State. Together with advocates from progressive Christian churches promoting passage of legislation dealing with economic justice, marriage equality, good government, and reproductive choice, we met our elected state representatives and their aides in small groups of five or six to discuss our concerns, even conferencing on the floor of the legislative chamber itself where one representative was preparing to vote on the state budget. "This is how democracy works," our daughter affirmed when we expressed our surprise at the openness and accessibility of our representatives: "It's no different in Washington." While we tend to focus on (and perhaps to revile) paid lobbyists when we think in terms of citizen efforts to influence legislation, we do ourselves a disservice in ceding the right of petition to professionals. To be sure, there is strength in numbers, but a single persuasive voice from any corner of the nation can change history, as James Madison himself appreciated and so amply proved.
