



REFORM JEWISH VOICE  
OF NEW YORK STATE

UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM  
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April 5, 2011 | 1 Nissan 5771

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## [Steven Cohen to Address Advocacy Day Participants](#)

RJV and Interfaith Impact are delighted to announce that Steven Cohen, Secretary to the Governor, will address participants at our [May 16th Advocacy Day](#). Before joining Gov. Cuomo's administration, Mr. Cohen served as his Counselor and Chief of Staff in the Attorney General's office. We look forward to meeting Mr. Cohen and hearing his remarks.

## **Join Us For Advocacy Day Briefing Calls**

In advance of our May 16th lobby day, we've arranged briefing calls on some of our hottest issues to help ensure all participants are thoroughly prepared. These calls are also an opportunity for advocates around the state, even those not joining us in Albany, to learn about the status of our social justice agenda. **All are welcome. [RSVP's appreciated.](#)**

### **Marriage Equality**

Join Kate McDonough, Coordinator for [Pride in the Pulpit](#) of Empire State Pride Agenda, who will update us on legislative efforts to achieve marriage equality for same-sex couples.

**Tuesday, April 26th from 7pm - 7:45pm**

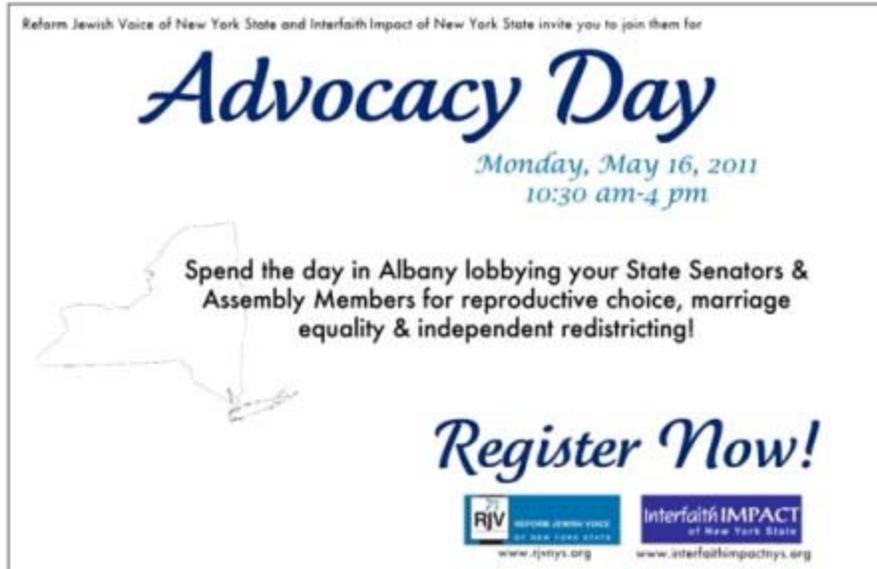
Dial: [1-213-289-0500](tel:1-213-289-0500); Participant Access Code: **820086#**

### **Reproductive Choice**

Join M. Tracey Brooks, President and CEO of [Family Planning Advocates of New York State](#), and Rabbi Dennis Ross, Director of [Concerned Clergy for Choice](#), who will address legislative efforts to protect reproductive choice choice.

**Thursday, May 5th from 7pm - 7:45pm**

Dial: [1-213-289-0500](tel:1-213-289-0500); Participant Access Code: **820086#**



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## [Budget Passes to RJV's Dismay](#)

Early Thursday morning, March 31st, lawmakers approved Gov. Cuomo's restrictive budget, which aims to close the state's \$10 billion budget gap. The \$132.5 billion agreement, the first to be passed on time in five years, places the burden of balancing the budget upon the most vulnerable New Yorkers. The Governor's failure to extend the temporary income tax surcharge ("millionaire's tax") means that essential hunger and crime prevention programs as well as nutrition assistance and vital public assistance grants will experience further cuts.

As Reform Jews, we are called to advocate on behalf of those without the means to speak for themselves. And that is exactly what we did. We are grateful to the many individuals in our network who sent letters of opposition to the Governor and reminded him that the budget is a moral document that should reflect the values of a responsible and compassionate society. While we are disappointed that cuts to many of the state's most vital programs for low-income New Yorker's are now law, we will not be stifled in our efforts to pass needed economic justice legislation that preserves and protects the social safety net.

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## **Steering Committee Member Barbara Zaron Speaks at "I Stand with Planned Parenthood" Rally**

On Saturday morning, March 19th, long-time RJV Steering Committee Member Barbara Zaron attended the "I Stand with Planned Parenthood" Rally organized by SUNY Albany VOX - Voices for Choice. The more than 100 people gathered at the rally were protesting H.R. 217, the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, which aims to defund Planned Parenthood and any other public family planning programs that also provide abortions across the entire United States. During her remarks, Barbara reiterated the Reform Jewish Movement's staunch support for women's health and reproductive choice issues. She also informed all rally participants that RJV will be lobbying on reproductive health, specifically enshrining women's right to choose in our state's constitution, at our [May 19th Advocacy Day in Albany](#). Learn more about RJV's stand on reproductive health [here](#).

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## **RJV Disappointed by Failure to Act on Independent Redistricting**

On February 17th, Gov. Cuomo introduced the Redistricting Reform Act of 2011, which establishes an independent Redistricting Commission to permanently reform how congressional and state legislative district lines are drawn in New York. RJV supports the Governor's efforts to enact this needed reform, and we are frustrated by recent recommendations from Senate Republicans that the legislation should be sought through a constitutional amendment, which would take two consecutive legislatures to pass. RJV wants to see redistricting reform in time for the 2012 election cycle and we will make sure our legislators hear this message when we head to [Albany on May 16th](#). Read our Good Government position paper [here](#).

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### **[Are you Hosting a Social Justice Event in New York?](#)**

If so, tell us about it! If you're planning to host an event related to the issues on which RJVNYS advocates, let us know a month in advance and we'll help you publicize it. Please send flyers and other information to Juliana at [info@rjvnys.org](mailto:info@rjvnys.org).

**[Call for submissions!](#)**

Are individuals in your congregation engaged in an interesting advocacy-related project? Are they lobbying for immigrants' rights? Starting letter writing campaigns? Marching for reproductive choice? Whatever the issue, we want to hear about it and showcase this valuable work in our newsletter! Please email submissions to Juliana at [info@rjvnys.org](mailto:info@rjvnys.org).