



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

EVERY CONGREGATION COUNTS
EVERY VOTE COUNTS



GET OUT THE (SHABBAT) VOTE Shabbat Preceding the Midterm Elections November 2-3, 2018

This year in the United States, midterm election takes place on Tuesday, November 6, 2018. The Shabbat before the election on November 2-3, 2018, we answer our sacred obligation to vote by exercising that right to elect people who embody the values we hold as Reform Jews. Take this time celebrate the power our Movement exhibits when we come together. All that's left to do now is vote, and the rest is commentary.

This first blessing is designed to use at services on The Shabbat before the election on November 2-3, 2018. The clergy person offering the blessing can invite to the *bimah* those who will be voting for the first time and invite those who have already submitted a ballot or voting on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 to rise at their seat. The first paragraph is for the clergy person to offer a blessing and the second italicized paragraph is for all those who are standing to recite together. At the end the clergy person can then recite the *Shehecheyanu* prayer for those voting for the first time.

The song that follows is also designed to use at services on the Shabbat before the election on November 2-3, 2018. The song "One People" written by Debbie Friedman z"l captures the mission of the Civic Engagement Campaign. It is our prayer that we become "One people seeking freedom, one people seeking justice, one people seeking hope, [and] one people seeking peace." The lyric "Guard our borders" has been edited to "Guard our values" not to make a political statement, but to transcend the politics of our present day. We come to this prayer not as representatives of any political party, but as inheritors of a rich Jewish tradition, which calls us to live a life of social responsibility and *tikkun olam*.

The final blessing can also be used during the Shabbat prior to the election as a reading. It places Jewish and democratic values in concert and compels the pursuance of justice in all facets of life. *May this blessing instill hope in Jewish communities across the United States and ignite the collective voice of the Reform Movement to bring about the world we want – a world overflowing with wholeness, justice and compassion.*

This material has been developed in partnership with Cantor Jason Kaufman and Rabbi Shana Goldstein Mackler. [Please let us know how you used these resources](#) and how you have brought the RAC's Civic Engagement Campaign to your community.



A Blessing for Voting

By: Rabbi Shana Goldstein Mackler

On this Shabbat before Election Day, I offer this blessing:

May we learn from one another, with open ears and open hearts, willing to hear various perspectives, narratives and points of view.

May we be grateful for those who heed the call to help lead their communities and the nation, whose names appear on the ballot, and those who serve in other ways.

May all of our leaders be ever-mindful of the challenges and needs facing all our neighbors. May they govern with integrity, compassion and righteousness. May they be blessed with wise and feeling hearts, and may their decisions be met with discernment and their focus always be toward justice.

May this sacred act of civic duty be a first step in engagement,
And not the last.

Hineini – I am here, prepared to engage in the mitzvah of voting.

By casting my ballot, I act out the values of my faith and my tradition. My vote is my voice, and my decision is my declaration of participation in the life, needs, and future of my country and my community.

I recall with gratitude the sacrifices of those who came before me, recognizing that voting is my right and my responsibility, and I am committed to ensure that right for others.

May I enter the voting booth informed and engaged, and emerge confident in the values and principles of our democracy.

May I respond to the results of the election with respect, civility, and humility.

*May this sacred act of civic duty be a first step in engagement,
And not the last.*

*Barukh atah adonai eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kidshanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok betzorkheitzibur.*

*Blessed are You, Eternal One, who makes us holy through commandments, and
commanded us to occupy ourselves with the needs of the community.*



One People By: Debbie Friedman

God bless our country and all who lead us
May they be wise and just and fair
God guard our values keep us
Safe and strong
God keep our country in your loving care
We'll be one people seeking freedom
One people seeking justice
One people seeking hope
One people seeking peace.
God bless our country
Let every race and creed
Unite in harmony and pride
We'll all join together
And we'll work hand in hand
We are one people standing side by side
God bless our country
And all our people
May we be free of hate and war
Lay down your swords and shields
Nations will not fight again
And they will not learn war any more.

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Prayer for Our Country (United States)

God of holiness, we hear Your message: *Justice, justice you shall pursue*. God of freedom, we hear Your charge: *Proclaim liberty throughout the land*. Inspire us through Your teachings and commandments to love and uphold our precious democracy. Let every citizen take responsibility for the rights and freedoms we cherish. Let each of us be an advocate for justice, an activist for liberty, a defender of dignity. And let us champion the values that make our nation a haven for the persecuted, a beacon of hope among the nations.

May our actions reflect compassion for all people, within our borders and abroad. May our leaders and officials embody the vision of our founders: *to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity*.

We pray for courage and conscience as we aim to support our country's highest values and aspirations: the hard-won rights that define us as a people, the responsibilities that they entail.

We pray for all who serve our country with selfless devotion – in peace and in war, from fields of battle to clinics and classrooms, from government to the grassroots: all those whose noble deeds and sacrifice benefit our nation and our world.

We are grateful for the rights of *Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness* that our founders ascribed to You, our Creator. We pray for the wisdom and moral strength, that we may be guardians of these rights for ourselves and for the sake of all people, now and forever.

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