

## Sanctuary Movement Proposal

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Brooklyn Heights Synagogue  
April 20, 2017

This proposal outlines the recommendation of the *Ad hoc* Task Force on Refugee and Immigration Issues ("Task Force") to the Board of Brooklyn Heights Synagogue ("BHS") to publicly declare BHS a sanctuary congregation that will resist the detention and deportation of immigrants in our community by engaging in and/or supporting the activities described below.

### Background

The concept of sanctuary congregations among a diverse group of faith organizations has existed for many years. In the mid-1980s, many churches and synagogues, including Reform Movement congregations, took action to provide assistance to Central American refugees at risk of deportation back to the very countries they had fled due to violence and civil conflict. In 1985, the Union for Reform Judaism stated in a resolution:

*We are instructed in the Holiness Code (Lev. 19:33) to take to heart the lessons of our own history by treating aliens in our midst with justice and compassion. "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Judaism affirms the supreme value of human life and the equal dignity of every human being. The prophets of Israel bade us to pursue justice, seek peace and build a society of loving kindness among all of God's creatures...*

The recently issued Executive Order (EO 13768, issued 1/25/17) calling for aggressive enforcement of our country's immigration laws pose an immediate threat of detention and deportation for millions of immigrants who have lived and worked in our country. The potential humanitarian crisis as families are torn apart and persons are deported to countries where they have not lived in many years is clear. Now, more than ever, faith-based organizations need to stand with like-minded congregations and raise our voices against the indiscriminate detention and deportation of our neighbors.

A congregation's participation in what has become known as the Sanctuary Movement can take many forms. The Task Force reviewed a number of resources to learn how other faith-based organizations have participated as a sanctuary and had meetings with Rabbi Lippe to discuss BHS's participation in the new Sanctuary Movement. The Task Force was particularly influenced by the Sanctuary proposal adopted by Temple Sinai in Washington, D.C. and a number of its activities were included in this proposal to the Board. Most notably, the Task Force is not

recommending, at this point in time, that BHS provide physical shelter to one or more undocumented immigrants at any of BHS's facilities.

There are many on-line materials for those Board members who would like to review the sources reviewed by the Task Force, chief among them being: <http://www.rac.org/providing-sanctuary-immigrants-facing-deportation>; <http://sanctuarynotdeportation.org>.

The following section sets forth the actions the Task Force recommends BHS take.

### Proposal

1. BHS will publicly declare itself to be a Sanctuary Congregation. BHS will publicize and speak out, both internally in BHS communications and externally to the media and/or at events, about its involvement as a Sanctuary Congregation. Further, BHS declares its general support for the principles embodied in the pledge to resist deportation and discrimination published by the Sanctuary Movement (in italics below). The Sanctuary Movement pledge reads as follows:

*As people of faith and people of conscience, we pledge to resist the newly elected administration's policy proposals to target and deport millions of undocumented immigrants and discriminate against marginalized communities. We will open up our congregations and communities as sanctuary spaces for those targeted by hate, and work alongside our friends, families and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.*

2. In response to the Sanctuary Movement pledge, BHS authorizes the congregation and its members to engage in the provision of any of the following sanctuary services/activities, either alone or in conjunction with other faith-based or community-based organizations\*\*:
  - Create and/or participate in rapid response teams to address immediate threats of deportation.
  - Connect with local sanctuary organizations and communities, immigrants' rights groups and other coalitions with common goals.
  - Provide space at BHS for use by BHS or its sanctuary partners to:
    - Host, support and/or hold "know your rights" or other self-help programs for immigrants.
    - Host, support and/or hold educational or organizational meetings regarding refugee and immigration issues.

--Host, support and/or hold meetings regarding advocacy on the local, state and/or federal level.

- Provide other legal or support services to immigrants as part of programs provided under BHS collaborations with other sanctuary congregations.

\*\*To the extent that any activity listed in # 2 above would involve the participation of BHS *qua* BHS, then prior to undertaking the activity, the Task Force shall notify the Executive Committee and obtain its approval to engaging in such activity.

- Provide financial support to other sanctuary congregations that are sheltering immigrants on their premises, any such support to be approved by separate resolution of the full Board.
3. With respect to the pledge's commitment to open up our congregation as "sanctuary space[s] for those targeted by hate", the Board authorizes further study of the legal considerations involved in providing shelter and support to any undocumented immigrant(s) within BHS facilities, with a report to be made by the Task Force to the Board by no later than the end of 2017.

The Rabbi shall keep the Board apprised on a regular basis as to the activities of the Task Force and its members in this area.

This proposal shall become effective upon its approval by majority vote of the Board and shall remain in effect until revoked or modified by the Board.