Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism Welcomes HUC-JIR's Decision to Accept a Transgender Student

By Religious Action Center

In response to the recent admission of Reuben Zellman, the soon-to-be first transgender rabbinical student, into Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), Rabbi Marla Feldman, Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, issued the following statement:

On behalf of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, I welcome the recent decision of HUC-JIR to accept a fully qualified student who has transitioned from one gender to another.

Transgenderism remains a virtually unspoken and unaccepted element within our society; this has led to discrimination in a number of areas: health care and insurance coverage, access to public facilities and a variety of legal issues. Transgendered individuals are frequent victims of hate crimes and employment discrimination.

In light of the urgent need to show support for this often victimized group, the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism recently adopted a resolution supporting the inclusion and acceptance of transgender and bisexual individuals within our Movement, and supporting. Legislation that opposes discrimination based on gender identity and allows individuals to be treated under the law as the gender with which they identify.

Throughout the Reform Movement's history, we have worked tirelessly to fight discrimination, support equality, and strengthen the rights of minorities and women. We are committed to defending any individual from the discrimination that arises from ignorance, fear, insensitivity, or hatred. The decision to admit Reuben Zellman on his own merits is an important step in bringing our Movement's practice in line with these beliefs.

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