

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 16, 2017

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Jewish Members of Congress, we are proud to represent the people of our diverse Congressional districts, and are committed to the sacred values of our faith. We write to you today regarding reports of a discriminatory Executive Order under consideration by your Administration that would undercut these values, harm our constituents, and reverberate globally.

Just as our nation's foundational texts call on us to preserve and promote equal justice under the law, the ancient Jewish command of "*tzedek, tzedek tirdof!*" or "justice, justice shall you seek!" compels us to speak out against bigotry, discrimination, and injustice. This guiding tenet informs our ardent opposition to any rules, orders, or policies that would allow discrimination against our constituents based on their identity or beliefs.

In particular, we fervently condemn the exploitation of religion and faith to rationalize acts of blatant discrimination. Last week, reports emerged that a forthcoming Executive Order could give license to federally funded faith-based organizations to discriminate against people as they believe to be consistent with their religious beliefs. Specifically, reports suggest that such an Executive Order would create wholesale exemptions to existing nondiscrimination policies for people and organizations who claim religious objections to same-sex marriage, premarital sex, abortion, and transgender identity. Using the specter of religious liberty as a tool to undermine the rights of others contradicts the American values enshrined in the Constitution as well as the principles of social justice and equality that are paramount to our Jewish faith.

Make no mistake – we celebrate the right of all people to worship and believe in accordance with their faith. However, this right does not override the rights of other Americans to live their truth, receive necessary health care services, or seek employment. Therefore, we oppose in the strongest of terms any policy, carve-out, or exemption, that would enable federally funded religious organizations to discriminate against others, which could jeopardize the health, safety, and livelihoods of our constituents.

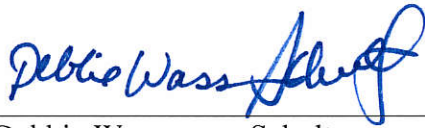
For example, under such a proposed policy, a transgender woman could be denied HIV testing at a federally funded hospital, or a gay man could be denied protection from violence at a federally funded shelter, so long as the provider determines that delivering such lifesaving services would violate their sincerely held religious beliefs. Similarly, we are concerned that this sort of license to discriminate would infringe on a woman's right to obtain reproductive health care, including access to contraception, from her federally funded school, health care provider, or employer. Unfortunately, our concerns are only exacerbated by the fact that the burden of such policies is

likely to be disproportionately felt by those with the least access to alternative services, such as women of color, people living in poverty, and rural Americans.

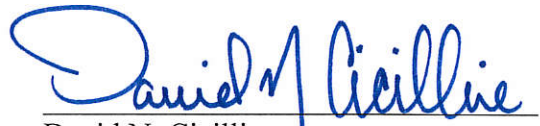
We are also deeply troubled by what the aforementioned broad-ranging religious exemptions could mean for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities in the United States, including for the Jewish community.

As Jews, we celebrate our constitutionally granted rights to practice our faith and worship in accordance with our tradition. However, it is also incumbent on us as people of faith and federal lawmakers to ensure equal justice, liberty, and protection for all people. We therefore implore you to maintain the application of existing nondiscrimination protections for faith-based organizations and service providers who receive federal dollars. The Torah, our Jewish traditions, and our responsibility as lawmakers pose no alternative.

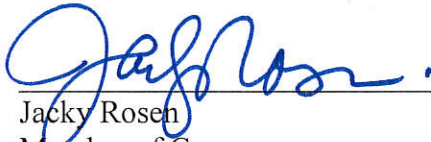
Sincerely,



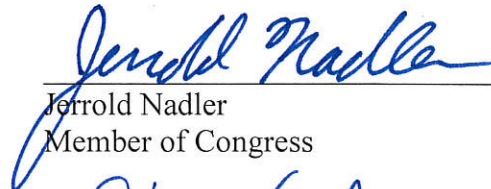
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Jacky Rosen  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



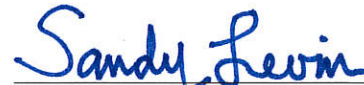
Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



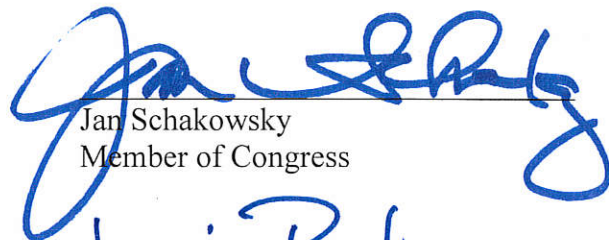
Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress



Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress



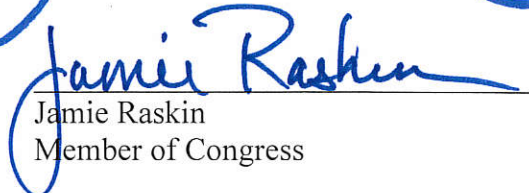
Susan Davis  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



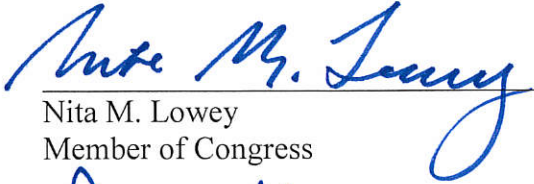
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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



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John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress



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Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



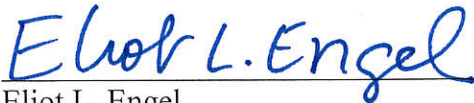
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Jared Polis  
Member of Congress



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Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



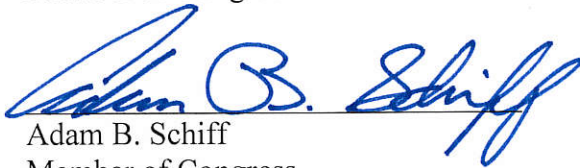
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Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress