



Advocacy Update

Sent May 29, 2013

Boy Scouts of America Policy Change

Last week, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) held the annual meeting of its National Council during which it [reconsidered its policy prohibiting gay scouts and scout leaders](#). The 1,400 person National Council, with representatives from across the country, voted to open its ranks to gay scouts. However, this victory was bittersweet, as the organization decided to maintain the prohibition on gay adults serving as volunteers, scout leaders and staff.

Prior to the vote, over 500 rabbis and cantors including WRJ Executive Director Rabbi Marla J. Feldman [signed a letter](#) urging the BSA to end its policy of excluding gay scouts and scout leaders. WRJ policy [dating back decades](#) calls for total equality for LGBT individuals, including the need to “advocate [for] the full integration of gay and lesbian Jews within our congregations and communities.” Though the BSA discussion has been tabled for now, there are ways to continue to advocate for LGBT Jews – including writing letters to Congress asking for [an end to workplace discrimination](#) or [stricter LGBT bullying regulations](#).

Environmental Protection Agency Regulations

Congress may be at a standstill when it comes to passing legislation that affects the environment, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening on climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is getting ready to release new regulations considering whether to reduce the amount of sulfur in gasoline, and whether to require technology in new cars that will reduce emissions of other pollutants. The proposed rules would [cut specific kinds of emissions](#) by as much as 80% and prevent as many as 2,400 premature deaths from associated air quality improvements; it would be like taking 33 million old cars off the road!

WRJ is a proud member of the [Coalition for the Environment and Jewish Life](#) (COEJL), which earlier this week hosted a webinar on these new standards and the opportunities to submit public comments. [COEJL's website on the subject](#) contains information on ways to become involved in this important legislative issue. You can also take action and [tell the EPA to move ahead with the proposed rules and make our air cleaner!](#) While you're at it, don't forget to [tell Congress to pass comprehensive climate legislation this Congress](#) – an issue that has been at the heart of [WRJ policy](#) for [many years](#).