

Joint Advisory Committee

of the Synagogue Council of America and the
National Community Relations Advisory Council

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Co-Chairmen

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November 21, 1969

To: Constituent Agencies
From: Rabbi Mordecai Waxman and Jerry Wagner, Co-Chairmen
Subject: Humane Slaughter Legislation

The Joint Advisory Committee once again urges that you be alert to humane slaughter legislation that may prove damaging to our practice of ritual slaughter. This caution is applicable even in states that have already enacted humane slaughter laws.

Our alert this year, as in past years, is occasioned by the continuing widespread efforts of Mrs. Alice Herrington (Schmid) and her organization, Friends of Animals, Inc. We believe Mrs. Herrington is intent on achieving legislation which will effectively outlaw shechita. Her proposals take several forms. For example, a bill she sponsored in New York state was posited on the erroneous assumption that Jewish law permits the rendering of the animal unconscious prior to slaughter. In a more recent measure offered in the Congress of the United States, the proposal was to declare that meat produced by ritual slaughter is deemed humanely slaughtered if consumed by observant Jews, but is not deemed to be humanely slaughtered if consumed by other persons. The Joint Advisory Committee considers such measures a grave danger to the freedom of conscience of observant Jews; if enacted, they would almost certainly have unfortunately mischievous consequences for American Jewry.

We are informed that Mrs. Herrington has established contacts in many states, and has offered suggestions for the revision of existing legislation to conform with her destructive formulas.

We once again urge that you keep in close touch with the legislative situation in your state to assure that no measures of this kind are permitted to make any headway.

Constituent Organizations

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE • AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS • B'NAI B'RITH—ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE • CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE • JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE U.S.A. • NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN
RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY • RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS • UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA • UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA
and state, county and local Jewish community councils affiliated with the NCRAC in Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Minnesota, Broome County, N.Y., Camden County, N.J., Eastern Union County, N.J., Essex County, N.J., Palm Beach County, Fla., St. Joseph County, Ind., Akron, Albany, Atlanta, Atlantic City, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Brooklyn, Canton, Charleston, S.C., Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Des Moines, Detroit, Easton, Erie, Flint, Fort Worth, Hartford, Houston, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Kingston, Long Beach, Cal., Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, New Britain, New Brunswick, New Haven, Newport News, Norfolk, Oakland, Orlando, Paterson, Peoria, Perth Amboy, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, the Plainfields, N.J., Portland, Me., Portland, Ore., Richmond, Rochester, Sacramento, St. Louis, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Savannah, Schenectady, Scranton, Springfield, Ill., Springfield, Mass., Syracuse, Toledo, Trenton, Tucson, Tulsa, Utica, Washington, Waterbury, Wilkes-Barre, Worcester, Youngstown.

We believe that in the long run the most effective deterrent to unwise humane slaughter legislation is the use of the large-animal restraining pen which the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has made available to meat packers without royalty or license fees of any kind. This pen replaces shackling and hoisting; it has received the approval of our foremost authorities on Halacha; it is acceptable to the U. S. Department of Agriculture; it is economically advantageous to the packing houses for both kosher and non-kosher slaughter; and it is much safer for workmen than is shackling and hoisting. Yet only a handful of plants across the country have installed the ASPCA pen. If you can be instrumental in bringing about the voluntary installation of this pen in your state, and thus obviate coercive legislation, you will have contributed immeasurably toward the solution of this vexing problem. We suggest that the installation of the pen might be more effectively undertaken in a concerted community effort in which rabbinical leaders could be particularly helpful. The ASPCA and the Joint Advisory Committee will give you their full cooperation in this effort.

We urge that you keep our secretary, Philip Jacobson, fully informed of all developments. In particular, we would appreciate having several copies of any humane slaughter legislation that is offered in your state. If we can be helpful to you in any way, please be sure to call upon us.

Best regards.

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