

# Annual REPORT



CALIFORNIA  
**LEGISLATIVE  
JEWISH CAUCUS**



# 2018







Asm. Marc Levine, Chair



Sen. Ben Allen, Vice Chair

## *Assemblymembers*



Marc Berman



Richard Bloom



Laura Friedman



Jesse Gabriel



Jose Medina



Adrin Nazarian



Blanca Rubio



Tony Thurmond

## *Senators*



Hannah-Beth Jackson



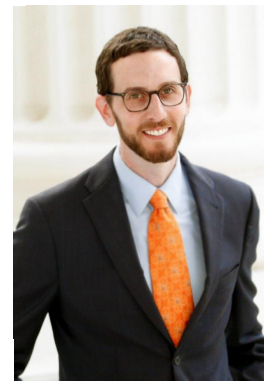
Bob Hertzberg



Steve Glazer



Henry Stern



Scott Wiener

## Message from the Chair

### ASSEMBLYMEMBER MARC LEVINE, 10th DISTRICT

It was an honor for me to chair the California Legislative Jewish Caucus during the 2017 – 2018 session. It was a privilege to lead the caucus alongside Senator Ben Allen to address the needs of the Jewish community in California. I am pleased to share the accomplishments of the Jewish Caucus during the past year. Together, we have demonstrated a strong commitment to standing against the federal government's immigration policies, furthering California's memorandum of understanding with Israel, and ensuring students feel safe at California's public universities.



Many of our achievements this year were reflected in the California State Budget. Specifically, the 2018-19 budget allocated \$10 million to maintain and restore the landmark Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles; \$3.6 million to social service agencies for care to Holocaust survivors in California; \$1.2 million for higher education training programs on hate speech; and \$500,000 for the Office of Emergency Services to protect non-profits with security needs. By adopting the priorities for the Caucus, the Legislature demonstrated a commitment to understanding the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts as well as confronting all forms of prejudice and discrimination today. The budget recognized the need to address the troubling anti-Semitic climate in many communities and institutions of higher education.

Every year, the California State Assembly honors Holocaust survivors, children of survivors, and World War II liberators during the Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony. This year, forty Assemblymembers honored survivors and their families. As the number of Holocaust survivors continues to decrease and anti-Semitism resurges, remembrance and understanding of the Holocaust is even more vital.

The Jewish Caucus also introduced AJR 35 condemning a new law in Poland subjecting individuals who cite the participation of Poles in Nazi crimes to imprisonment for up to three years, despite the historical record of this collaboration. When the resolution passed the Assembly unanimously we began meaningful communication with the Polish Consul General. International pressure, including our action, resulted in amendments to the law eliminating the criminal penalties for acknowledgment of the collaboration between Poles and Nazis.

Since my election in 2012, it was my goal to bring California State legislators to Israel. The American Jewish Committee's Project Interchange worked with the Caucus to bring a delegation of lawmakers on their first trip to Israel. Eight of my colleagues experienced the country firsthand. Legislators met with Israeli and Palestinian officials, toured the country, and studied Israel's entrepreneurial economy. This was the first trip of its kind focused on members of the California Legislature.

I am proud of our accomplishments, and confident the Caucus will remain a strong Jewish voice for justice, equality, and progress for all people who call California home.



## Message from the Vice Chair

SENATOR BEN ALLEN, 26th DISTRICT

2018 was a great year for the Jewish Caucus. We are hitting our stride, and coming together as an effective voice for our community.

Our caucus successfully advocated for several initiatives that were funded in the 2018-19 state budget. They included a \$10 million appropriation to help renovate the Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, \$3.6 million for additional services for frail, elderly Holocaust survivors, \$1.2 million for public colleges and universities to combat hate-speech and discrimination on campuses, and \$500,000 to improve security measures at nonprofit organizations that are targets of hate-motivated violence. We are grateful to our colleagues and to Governor Jerry Brown for their support of these funding requests.

This year's Rosenthal Capitol Seder dinner was especially memorable thanks to the attendance of the late Senator Herschel Rosenthal's family. He was one of my predecessors in the Senate, and passed away in 2009. It was wonderful to share with his son Joel, daughter-in-law Susan, and granddaughter Helena the event named in his honor, and to remember his legacy of progressive accomplishments.

One of the year's personal highlights for me was receiving the Jerry Samson Legislator of the Year Award from the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California at their advocacy day in Sacramento in May. In September, I was honored to host then-Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom in my district for Rosh Hashanah services at Temple Emanuel and Kehillat Israel. I appreciate the warm welcome these congregations gave us.

I continue to be impressed by the smart, energetic, and dedicated group of legislators in our caucus. It is an exceptional group and I look forward to continuing our work together.

Last but not least, I'd like to offer special thanks to our chair, Assemblymember Marc Levine, who has ably led us these past two years. We will miss him as chair next year, but I look forward to his ongoing involvement and invaluable counsel with the caucus.





# Updates from our Members

## **ASSEMBLYMEMBER MARC BERMAN, 24th DISTRICT**

A highlight from 2018 - in addition to all of the great work we did in the Legislature - was a trip that I took to Israel during our July recess. Organized by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and their Project Interchange, I had the privilege of traveling all throughout Israel with a bipartisan, very diverse group of colleagues.



From a bus trip to Nachal Oz, a kibbutz on the Gaza border in the south, to a helicopter ride to the Galilee Medical Center in the north, to a visit to the West Bank town of Ramallah for a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, the week was full of substantive debate and dialogue across a broad spectrum of viewpoints. The only constant among all of the conversations was the frequent refrain that "it's complicated."

The trip also provided a wonderful opportunity to get to know my colleagues on a more personal level, and to discuss complex issues without the pressure and posturing that often comes with cameras and microphones. We all came away with a greater appreciation for the challenging situation Israel finds itself in, and a deeper respect for each other.

## **ASSEMBLYMEMBER RICHARD BLOOM, 50th DISTRICT**



As a member of the Budget Conference Committee, I helped secure \$10 million for the Museum of Tolerance to modernize their operations. In addition, we allocated \$3.6 million for social services that benefit Holocaust Survivors, \$1.2 million for hate speech training in higher education, and \$500,000 for nonprofits to install security upgrades - the latter presaging the needs highlighted by the Squirrel Hill Synagogue shooting and the increasing number of anti-Semitic acts and hate crimes, in general.

The work of the Jewish Caucus is absolutely imperative in combating the rise of anti-Semitism and other forms of hate. Last November, my office hosted a forum of hate crime experts from the Anti-Defamation League, LA County Human Relations Commission, and the FBI. Also in attendance were elected officials, law enforcement, community leaders, and constituents. This was our second forum on "The State of Hate" and my office will be hosting a follow-up in 2019.

In July, I was honored to co-host the National Council of State Legislature's "California – Illinois Connection Reception" at the Museum of Tolerance. Here, we honored Illinois State Senator and incoming NCSL President Toi Hutchinson with the Simon Wiesenthal Center's National Leadership Award.

I wish to extend my warmest appreciation to Caucus Chair Marc Levine and Vice-Chair Ben Allen for their leadership. I look forward to carrying on our work in the coming year with our incoming leaders.

## **ASSEMBLYMEMBER LAURA FRIEDMAN, 43rd DISTRICT**

I had another incredible year representing the 43rd Assembly District, and I'm proud to be a member of the Jewish Caucus. This year, I had the privilege and honor of introducing Assembly Concurrent Resolution 207, co-authored by almost 80 of my legislative colleagues, to honor Yom HaShoah or Holocaust Memorial Day, on April 16, 2018. The resolution marked the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, providing us all an opportunity to pause and reflect upon this horrific moment in history.

Remembrance is deeply personal for me, as my great grandparents fled the pogroms and riots in Eastern Europe in 1910 to find safety and a new life in the United States. I lost much of my family lineage at exactly the time of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. We cannot forget the lessons of our history and the sacrifices of our ancestors, and we must continue to fight back against the ever-present threat of bigotry. The number of hate groups in the U.S. has increased by 20 percent over the past three years, and many of those groups are headquartered right here in California. Every year, the California State Legislature honors Yom HaShoah and reaffirms our steadfast pledge to stand strong against hatred, intolerance, anti-Semitism, and the erasure of history. Here's to another year of progress, change, tradition and celebration.



## **ASSEMBLYMEMBER JESSE GABRIEL, 45th DISTRICT**



As the newest member of the Legislature, I look forward to working with my colleagues to strengthen the Jewish community and to bring our Jewish values into the policymaking process.

My deep connection to Judaism has shaped nearly every aspect of my life. As a child, I spent several years living in Israel, and met my wife Rachel when we were both studying abroad at Tel Aviv University. I was deeply engaged in Jewish and pro-Israel advocacy at UC Berkeley and Harvard Law School, and helped draft Iran sanctions legislation when I worked as a senior advisor in the U.S. Senate. For the last several years, I have served as a board member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, where I led advocacy efforts that helped secure more than \$3

million in state funding for nonprofits facing hate-motivated violence. I have also worked with Jewish organizations in Los Angeles to protect Darfuri refugees, assist undocumented young people applying for DACA, and grow interfaith partnerships to address homelessness.

In the few short weeks I have been in office, I have sought to co-author legislation that reflects our Jewish values and am proud that my first floor speech was on behalf of the Jewish Caucus in opposition to the Administration's family separation policy. In the coming years, I look forward to working with our caucus and the broader Jewish community to advance legislation that reflects the best of our California and Jewish values.

Together, we can strengthen our community, uplift those living at the margins of society, and defeat antisemitism, hate, and discrimination of all forms.



## SENATOR STEVE GLAZER, 7th DISTRICT



*"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a socialist.*

*"Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a trade unionist.*

*"Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Jew.*

*"Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me." -- German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984).*

This is the famous poem reflecting the silence and cowardice of German intellectuals after the Nazis rose to power. Part of the silence was the belief that this could not happen here. This, of course, being a step-by-step annihilation of a people. Each step taken toward the Holocaust – the building of the first Nazi Concentration Camps in 1933 after Hitler first took power, leading to Krystallnacht in 1938 – was matched by another set of horrors. Each step taken until 6 million Jews were exterminated.

We are seeing new efforts to scapegoat people based on ethnicity, color and national origin. This new nationalism brings scary reminders of what could happen if demagogues rise to power. Our diversity and pluralism are the strength of America. We must be active in protecting it.

## SENATOR BOB HERTZBERG, 18th DISTRICT

Shalom from the San Fernando Valley! I am proud to report once again that the Valley's Jewish community is thriving, and working to fulfill our shared obligation to serve those in need.

Back in April of this year, I was honored to join ETTA for the grand opening of its magnificent new headquarters in North Hollywood, and present the organization's leaders with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the California State Senate. ETTA is a phenomenal organization that provides an array of services – including residential housing, case management and employment training, among others – to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



In service of this mission, ETTA partners with several Jewish community groups in the Los Angeles Area, such as The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, The Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles, The Los Angeles Jewish Teen Initiative, and the Jewish Funders Network. With the help of these groups, ETTA is making a huge impact in the San Fernando Valley and beyond - and it's only getting bigger.

A few months later, in August, I invited staff from ETTA and similar organizations to a roundtable conversation at my district office, where we discussed a variety of issues affecting young adults on the autism spectrum.

The hour-long discussion covered topics ranging from housing services to tax reform to non-profit funding opportunities, and it was inspiring to see such a strong network of leaders committed to this critical issue. The Torah commands us, "Tzedek, tzedek tirdof" – "Justice, justice you shall pursue." It is heartening to know that the spirit of this cherished principle is alive and well in the San Fernando Valley.

## SENATOR HANNAH-BETH JACKSON, 19th DISTRICT

This past year, the nation and the world were shaken as hundreds of brave women began coming forward and sharing their experiences of sexual harassment as part of the #metoo movement.

I carried and authored two bills that were signed into law to combat sexual harassment. Senate Bill 1300, supported by groups such as the National Council of Jewish Women, closes loopholes that discourage or prevent victims from speaking out and allow employers to avoid sexual harassment and discrimination laws. It provides guidance to the courts on the “severe or pervasive” legal standard for sexual harassment, so that it is fairly applied to protect victims. SB 1300 also prohibits non-disparagement clauses and “sneaky releases” that prevent victims from speaking out about abuse and seeking justice.



My SB 224, also signed into law, expands protections beyond the traditional employer-employee relationship to explicitly prohibit sexual harassment by investors, elected officials, lobbyists, directors and producers.

The #metoo movement also shed light on the vital importance of having more women in leadership positions. This year, I also proudly authored the first law in the nation to require more women on corporate boards, SB 826.

In the wake of the recent shooting at the Pittsburgh synagogue, and a rise in anti-Semitism across the country, I believe the work and presence of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus has never been more vital.

## ASSEMBLYMEMBER ADRIN NAZARIAN, 46th DISTRICT



The Jewish community knows all too well about the need for self-defense. From Judah Maccabee's battle against Antiochus to Israel's constant struggle for survival, our people understand the continuing importance of knowing self-defense tactics. Likewise, the rise in hate crimes in the United States over the past few years is a daunting reminder of how much more needs to be done to promote diversity and respect. However, when hateful rhetoric turns into physical harm, we need to be vigilant and prepared. That's why I organize regular self-defense workshops for women and individuals who want to better protect themselves. Over the past six years I've been in office, I've hosted more than 60 classes that have helped over 3,500 women learn proper self-defense techniques if they are ever attacked. Similarly, as more stories of sexual harassment are revealed, self-defense training is an important way for women to gain confidence and courage to combat misconduct.

While learning a proper jab can be intimidating, self-defense classes powerfully connect the community. Participants gain a sense of camaraderie and understanding of the different ways to deflect attacks. I am extremely appreciative for the local synagogues, churches, and recreation centers in my district for hosting these events.

As Hillel once said, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?” Through self-defense training, my constituents are becoming empowered to respond to injustice in our community.



## SENATOR HENRY STERN, 27th DISTRICT

I went to Israel in January to exchange strategies on water and clean energy. I came home with an entirely new perspective on lawmaking.

There is something exigent about pushing the boundaries of policy when 100,000 rockets are pointed at your family. Every facet of Israeli life is under the Iron Dome.

Yet, Israel's leaders find a way to diligently proceed with the work to modernize their nation.

In 2014, California and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on energy and water innovation. The mission of our California delegation was to put muscle behind the memo with funding and technical expertise.

Energy and water are not just critical environmental challenges, but matters of security and economic competitiveness. Israel's energy strategy currently relies heavily on fossil fuels — only 2% of its grid is renewable. On the other hand, Israelis capture and recycle about 85% of their water. California wastes about 85% of all stormwater, failing to capture this valuable resource.

Our joint efforts to secure a cleaner, more sustainable future for Israel and California must proceed, with California's imagination and market power, and that deep fortitude that is ancient in origin, and alive and well in Israel today.



## ASSEMBLYMEMBER TONY THURMOND, 15th DISTRICT



As I close out my final year in the California State Assembly, I reflect back on my tenure as a member of the Legislative Jewish Caucus with pride over our many legislative accomplishments and inspired by the remarkable people that we honored in 2018.

I was humbled to honor Ben Stern during the annual Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony. Ben has spent his life fighting Nazi tyranny, first as a Holocaust survivor, and later as a civil rights activist. His ongoing resolve to fight against racism and xenophobia serves as an example for the Jewish Caucus, Legislature, and our communities – but especially our young people.

It is more imperative than ever before to encourage our students to practice the values that Mr. Stern stands up for: inclusivity, tolerance, respect. I'm proud the Legislative Jewish Caucus supported my bills that promoted inclusivity in the classroom like dual language immersion in schools and more LGBTQ services.

It has been my privilege to serve as a member of the Legislative Jewish Caucus and I know that the caucus will continue to support the next generation of leaders as they uphold the values Mr. Stern and others stand for with integrity.

## **SENATOR SCOTT WIENER, 11th DISTRICT**

We see the impacts hate-fueled rhetoric has on our nation, our communities, and our policies. We saw these tragic effects in the massacre in Pittsburgh, in this Administration's vile treatment of immigrants, and in the rampant anti-Semitism that is spreading online and in our communities. While the president scapegoats, fear-mongers, and spreads hatred, I am proud that our Caucus stands with communities targeted by this administration, including immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, and communities of color.

This year, the Jewish Caucus secured funding for security services at non-profit organizations, including religious institutions. Recent events show how necessary these monies are, and I know we will push for more next year. We also successfully worked with San Francisco State University to combat and more effectively address the hostile and anti-Semitic environment that, unfortunately, has manifested on campus.



I am proud of our Jewish Caucus for standing in solidarity with the Latino Caucus in denouncing Trump Administration policies that rip immigrant families apart. We must stand up instantly and unequivocally against policies that spread hate and steal the human rights of any group or individual.

Work remains, and while the Trump Administration makes it more challenging, I am proud of and thankful to the Jewish Caucus and its chair, Assemblymember Levine, for the continued work on behalf of all our communities.





## OUR MISSION

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To be a Jewish voice for justice, equality, and progress.

To promote the educational, social, legislative, professional and cultural interests of its members.

To serve as a resource and advocate on behalf of the professional, educational, social, political and cultural concerns of the Jewish Community.

To develop and advance programs and policies that further the interests of the Jewish Caucus.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAUCUS

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Visit <http://jewishcaucus.legislature.ca.gov>

Follow us on twitter @CAJewishCaucus

State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Room 5135  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0010

Tel: (916) 319-2010  
Fax: (916) 319-2110

**California Legislative Jewish Caucus**  
**State Capitol**  
**P.O. Box 942849**  
**Sacramento, CA 94249**



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