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MEMO

To: Members, Rabbinic Circle

From: Rabbi Yaakov Menken, Executive Vice President

on behalf of the Rabbinic Board

Date: January 29, 2026 / 11 Shevat 5786

Re: 2025 Calendar Year in Review: "Surging in Strength"

In 2025, CJV didn't just grow—we surged. Our voice reached farther across public policy forums, media, and Capitol Hill, earning deeper access inside the Federal government and forging strategic partnerships with major organizations in Washington and beyond. Our national and international footprint expanded dramatically. Across the public sphere CJV is now recognized, unmistakably, as the Jewish voice that is guided by, and chooses, principles over politics.

Advocacy Across America

Throughout 2025, CJV engaged on Capitol Hill and at federal agencies with an intensity exceeding all prior years: in-person, online, and in every forum where policy is shaped. We advised on legislation and rulemaking, sat on key committees and coalitions fighting antisemitism, and stood firmly behind our allies when they were falsely accused of hate.

Senior White House staff, the DOJ's antisemitism office, and faith outreach leaders relied on CJV as a trusted partner. On Capitol Hill, we deepened ties and gained entry into House Leadership Coalition meetings with Speaker Mike Johnson and Republican House Leadership, helping shape national priorities with House leadership.

In May, Rabbi Menken's appointment to President Trump's Advisory Board of Religious Leaders to the U.S. Religious Liberty Commission signaled unmistakably that CJV's voice is not only heard, but sought out at the highest levels of government.

In November, CJV publicly resigned from the Heritage Foundation's National Task Force to Combat Antisemitism (NTFCA), despite being a charter member and an early supporter of its Project Esther initiative. This came after Heritage Foundation's President Kevin Roberts released a video statement embracing Tucker Carlson as a "close friend" and dismissed Carlson's critics as a "venomous coalition."

When Roberts rejected our demand for corrective action, we didn't go alone; our stand became a catalyst. The Task Force itself was ultimately compelled to withdraw from the Heritage Foundation, followed by nearly half of the Heritage Board of Trustees, plus numerous Vice Presidents, Directors and other high-level Heritage staff.

Confronting False "Jewish" Narratives

CJV was a beacon of truth. When the second Trump Administration announced that its agencies would recognize that there are two genders, we rebutted the declaration by the Reform movement that to do otherwise is a "Jewish" practice. When Reform gathered 100 left-wing organizations and congregations to state their position, we responded with a letter of our own, with over 150 Rabbinic leaders and scholars reaffirming Judaism's "clear and unambiguous stance on human genders."

CJV remains the only national Jewish organization vocally advocating to preserve women's sports, prisons, and private spaces for biological women. In 2025, we championed the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act; with our support, the bill passed the House and advanced to the Senate.

We continued to oppose elective abortion in political and media spheres, and, of course, renewed our support for the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. Senators James Lankford, Jim Risch, and Katie Britt all touted CJV's support for the bill.

School choice was another obvious favorite; the lead sponsors of the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA), Sens. Bill Cassidy and Tim Scott, and Reps. Adrian Smith and Burgess Owens, all noted CJV's support. The ECCA passed as part of the Federal budget.

CJV aided legal efforts on behalf of a Jewish student denied easy access to kosher food, and championed school choice. We also participated in amici briefs on religious freedom, submitted public comments, and engaged in legal discussions crucial to

protecting Orthodox interests. On many of these issues, our involvement ensured that the Orthodox perspective was heard at all.

Influence at the State Level

In February, CJV Missouri held its second annual Day of Advocacy at the state capitol, with six formal meetings with legislators and numerous informal meetings and introductions. The Missouri team has already announced the third annual mission, set for early next month.

Late that same month, R' Ze'ev Smason testified before the Missouri House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development, backing HB 937, a bill to utilize the working definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance as part of an effort to stop antisemitic discrimination in Missouri's public K–12 schools and universities. Although the clock ran out on last year's session, CJV helped develop bipartisan sponsorship of the measure this year, along with public support from the Governor. This year it was one of the first bills heard in committee, and is moving quickly.

In September, CJV and the Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana (JAACI) partnered to rebrand the latter as CJV Indiana. The launch event featured an address from Indiana Secretary of State Diego Morales, recognizing the CJV's key role advocating for authentic Jewish values in public policy.

Coupled with the success of CJV Missouri, merging with an established state program in Indiana has renewed the momentum to form chapters in other states during the year ahead.

Impact in the Media

In addition to raising our voices in political and community circles, CJV was featured this year on Newsmax, Fox News Radio, Real America's Voice, i24News, Just the News, One America's News and many more. Clips of Rabbi Menken's statements were frequently shared in social media, reaching much of the Orthodox and pro-Israel communities. Op-eds from multiple CJV Rabbis appeared in national and international publications including the Jerusalem Post, the New York Post, Jewish News Syndicate, Townhall, Washington Times, Daily Wire, Daily Signal, and more.

In February, CJV released an original investigative documentary, *Terror Bank*. The

documentary built upon Rabbi Menken's previous report exposing the hypocrisy and the ties to terror of Amalgamated Bank, the bank of choice for the Democratic Party and leading Democratic politicians. It highlighted that Amalgamated's Charitable Foundation (ACF), chaired by the CEO of the bank itself, was hypocritically running a campaign to stop other Donor Advised Funds from donating to those it deemed "hate groups," while ACF itself was steering funds to sponsors of Middle Eastern terrorism. In the wake of Rabbi Menken's op-ed, the ACF scrubbed all mention of its "Hate is Not Charitable" campaign from its website, and hid the composition of its Board of Trustees.

In June, CJV launched a bold Times Square billboard campaign calling out the genocidal "Free Palestine" slogan and those who use it. For 30 days, that message towered over the crossroads of the world. Besides coverage in outlets including the *New York Post*, *Newsmax* featured it throughout the launch day, pushing CJV's message into millions of American homes.

Leadership Update

Following the passing of Vice President Rabbi Dov Fischer zt"l before *Rosh Hashanah*, the CJV Rabbinic Board unanimously elected Rabbi Ze'ev Smason to be the next National Vice President of the CJV. Rabbi Smason brings 25 years of distinguished service as rabbi of Nusach Hari B'nai Zion in St. Louis, and as above, leads CJV Missouri. In his new position, he will continue to oversee CJV's growing state chapter network. Upon his election, he spoke with characteristic humility and resolve, pledging to advance CJV's mission on behalf of Am Yisrael with the same integrity and strength that defined his predecessor.

We also strengthened our operational backbone, expanding our team with two strategic hires. In July, Ali Luck joined us as Director of Operations, to build, automate, and maintain the systems that power CJV's rapid growth. And in December, we brought on Mark Hoffman as Director of Special Projects, to drive new initiatives, expand outreach, and amplify CJV's national impact.

Much More On the Way

An antisemitism curriculum, outreach to pro-values Christians, advocacy for changes on campus, and public call-outs of Jewish "leaders" bent upon countering Jewish interests, are all on the way, along with further efforts to streamline our operations and improve our communications with you, our critical base of support.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me (menken@cjvalues.org) or our Director of Special Projects (mhoffman@cjvalues.org) if you would like to learn more about participating or supporting our efforts. Or, if you prefer, please visit our website to [contribute](#) to another year of dramatic growth!