



**Central Conference
of American Rabbis**

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Resolution Adopted by the CCAR

RESOLUTION ON SAME GENDER OFFICIATION

**Resolution adopted at the 111th Convention of the
Central Conference of American Rabbis
March, 2000**

Background

Over the years, the Central Conference of American Rabbis has adopted a number of positions on the rights of homosexuals, on homosexuality in the rabbinate, and advocating changes in civil law pertaining to same-gender relationships.

In 1977, the CCAR adopted a resolution calling for legislation decriminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults, and calling for an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians. The resolution called on Reform Jewish organizations to develop programs to implement this stand.

In 1990, the CCAR endorsed the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Homosexuality and the Rabbinate. This position paper urged that "all rabbis, regardless of sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation that they have chosen." The committee endorsed the view that "all Jews are religiously equal regardless of their sexual orientation." The committee expressed its agreement with changes in the admissions policies of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, which stated that the "sexual orientation of an applicant [be considered] only within the context of a candidate's overall suitability for the rabbinate," and reaffirmed that all rabbinic graduates of the HUC-JIR would be admitted into CCAR membership upon application. The report described differing views within the committee as to the nature of *kiddushin*, and deferred the matter of rabbinic officiation.

A 1996 resolution resolved that the CCAR "support the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage," and voiced opposition to governmental efforts to ban gay and lesbian marriages.

In addition to these resolutions, two CCAR committees have addressed the question of same-gender officiation. The CCAR Committee on Responsa addressed the question of whether homosexual relationships can qualify as *kiddushin* (which it defined as "Jewish marriage"). By a committee majority of 7 to 2, the committee concluded that "homosexual relationships, however exclusive and committed they may be, do not fit within this legal category; they cannot be called *kiddushin*. We do not understand Jewish marriage apart from the concept of *kiddushin*." The committee acknowledged its lack of consensus on this question.

[The Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality issued a report in 1998](#) which included its conclusion, by a committee majority of 11 with 1 abstention, that "kedushah may be present in committed same gender relationships between two Jews and that these relationships can serve as the foundation of stable Jewish families, thus adding strength to the Jewish community." The report called upon the CCAR to support all colleagues in their choices in this matter, and to develop educational programs.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS justice and human dignity are cherished Jewish values, and

WHEREAS, in March of 1999 the Women's Rabbinic Network passed a resolution urging the Central Conference of American Rabbis to bring the issue of honoring ceremonies between two Jews of the same gender to the floor of the convention plenum, and

WHEREAS, the institutions of Reform Judaism have a long history of support for civil and equal rights for gays and lesbians, and

WHEREAS, North American organizations of the Reform Movement have passed resolutions in support of civil marriage

for gays and lesbians, therefore

WE DO HEREBY RESOLVE, that the relationship of a Jewish, same gender couple is worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish ritual, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recognize the diversity of opinions within our ranks on this issue. We support the decision of those who choose to officiate at rituals of union for same-gender couples, and we support the decision of those who do not, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the CCAR to support all colleagues in their choices in this matter, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also call upon the CCAR to develop both educational and liturgical resources in this area.



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