

**Resolution in Solidarity with and Affirming the Rights of
Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming People**

March 2017

Whereas one of the core principles of Torah asserts that all humanity is created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God; and

Whereas throughout human history several cultures have recognized a diversity of genders; and

Whereas the Jewish people, in the literature of *halakhah*, from early midrash, the Mishnah and onward, bears witness to and acknowledges a variety of non-binary genders, concluding that people of transgender experience have the obligations and privileges of all Jews; and

Whereas people of non-binary gender expression, transgender, and gender non-conforming people individually and collectively contribute positively to the quality of life, faith, Jewish study and *tikkun olam* work within various institutions affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement and throughout the Jewish world; and

Whereas transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people provide valuable rabbinic, educational, pastoral, and lay leadership within the Reconstructionist movement and in other arenas of Jewish life; and

Whereas a growing number of Jewish secular and religious organizations have recognized the Jewish moral imperative of affirming, supporting, and fully welcoming transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people;

Therefore, be it resolved that we commit to the full inclusion, acceptance, appreciation, celebration and welcome of people of all gender identities in Jewish life and in society at large; and

Be it further resolved that we condemn and grieve all instances of bias, discrimination, violence, hatred, and intimidation against transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals; and

Be it further resolved that the Reconstructionist movement strongly advocates for the full equality of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people and for equal protections for people of all gender identities and expressions under the law, at all levels of government, in North America and in Israel; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage all programs affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement, including the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, all Reconstructionist affiliates and Camp JRF, to continue to educate themselves, their employees and their constituencies about the needs and rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people, so as to create fully inclusive settings; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage all Reconstructionist movement bodies and affiliated groups to learn about people of all gender identities and expressions, including learning about the gifts, aspirations, realities and needs of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage all those involved in the Reconstructionist movement to work towards the goal of creating gatherings that are fully welcoming, safe spaces for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, and towards those ends, to evaluate and, where necessary, to modify physical sites and workplaces in an effort to ensure dignity and safety for people of all gender identities and expressions. We urge Reconstructionist-affiliated groups to ensure, as soon as is feasible, the availability of all-gender restrooms in all facilities and at all events as one example of this commitment; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage Reconstructionist communities and organizations to learn about emerging practices in the Jewish community that seek to integrate the presence and experiences of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people into our liturgy and expressions of worship. We also encourage Reconstructionist rabbis, educators, and lay leaders to contribute to and continue their development of these kinds of new liturgical and ritual expressions; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage Reconstructionist organizations to educate themselves and their constituencies about the need of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people to be known by the identity, name, and pronoun of their choice, and to learn about ways that everyday language choices can be modified so that they are fully inclusive of gender non-conforming and transgender people; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage, and will endeavor to support, all Reconstructionist-affiliated institutions to begin or to continue to work with secular and/or Jewish transgender, lesbian, gay and bisexual organizations to create inclusive and welcoming communities for people of all gender identities and expressions and to spread awareness and increase knowledge of issues related to gender identity and expression. This work may include trainings for religious school and administrative staff, community education programs on gender identity and expression, *divrei torah* on these topics, development of non-discrimination policies which include gender identity and gender expression, and the creation of membership and other forms that eliminate the need to select a gender and/or offers more than two gender options, and more; and

Be it further resolved that the Department of Affiliate Support at RRC/Jewish Reconstructionist Communities will endeavor to provide Reconstructionist affiliates with resources and opportunities for education and training about welcoming and supporting transgender and gender non-conforming people; and

Be it further resolved that we commend the courageous and helpful work of Jewish and non-Jewish organizations that advocate and educate for the full inclusion of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, including but not limited to such organizations as the National Center for Transgender Equality, TransTorah, Keshet, The Youth & Gender Media Project, Ritualwell, the tGq at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and other organizational bodies within other movements of Judaism.