

**Welcome to**  
***Judaism & Current Events***

**The Voting Dilemma**  
**in Times of Global Pandemic**  
**7/21/2020**

Moderator: Marcy Hotz  
Congregation Emanu-El of Waukesha

# Agenda

1. Prayer for Peace in Times of Trouble
2. Guidelines
3. CEEW Statement
4. URJ Statement on Standing Up for Voter Protection and Participation
5. How Does COVID-19 Create Issues with Voting?
6. What Happened in Georgia and Wisconsin at Their Most Recent Elections?
7. Wisconsin Election, April 7, 2020
8. How Can People Vote Safely During the Pandemic?
9. What Can I do?
10. How to Request an Absentee Ballot
11. Next Topic
12. Future Topics

## A Prayer for Peace in Times of Trouble

*Lord, give us peace that we may shine brightly in a dark world. Grant us the courage to live faithfully to our highest values even in the midst of hard times. Let our faith in each other be the beginning of wisdom and compassion rather than allowing fear to drive our actions.*

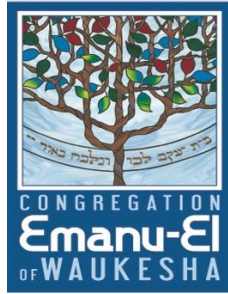
*Help us to live strongly in the midst of a world that needs to know peace. We pray for our brothers and sisters of the world, for we are of one family.*

*Show us mercy and heal those who are suffering in times of trouble and plague. Most of all, inspire us to restore the world and make all things new.*

*Amen.*

## Guidelines

- **This is a discussion, not a debate.** The purpose is *not* to win an argument, but to hear many points of view and explore many options and solutions.
- **Everyone is encouraged to participate.** But you may just listen.
- **No one or two individuals should dominate a discussion.** If you have already voiced your thoughts, let others have an opportunity.
- **Raise your hand to signify your wish to speak.** The Moderator will call on you. Ideally, one person speaks at a time. Keep interjections to a minimum. If you think you will forget an idea that comes to mind, write it down.
- **Please fact-check your sources.** We don't want to give oxygen to unverifiable information.
- **Listen to and respect other points of view.**
- **Do your best to understand the pros and cons** of every opinion, not just those you agree with. Be as objective and open-minded as you can be.
- **Seek first to understand, not to be understood.** Ask questions to seek clarification. Be thoughtful. Be kind.



CEEW wishes you to note:

- By consensus, the board recognizes that a group of members decided to hold their own forum on Judaism & Current Events.
- Views expressed during conversations may not necessarily be those of CEEW.

## URJ Statement: Standing Up for Voter Protection and Participation

(URJ website: <https://urj.org/blog/2016/08/29/get-involved-nitzavim-standing-voter-protection-and-participation>)

We demonstrate our love by standing together with our allies at the NAACP, PICO National Network, and Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Together, we are committed to protecting the right to vote and encouraging voter participation.

Our love is about justice and accountability. We will act with love by organizing to beat back efforts to suppress the vote across the United States. Unfettered access to the polls is a sacred aspect of American democracy and a fundamental component of racial justice....

**The 2013 Supreme Court decision *Shelby v. Holder* eviscerated the longstanding Voting Rights Act....**

On Tu B'Av, Rabbi Rick Jacobs reminded us, "The God we love is impatient with injustice!" This November will mark the first presidential election in more than 50 years that lacks the full protection of the Voting Rights Act. We cannot allow the forces of racism and those who would constrict our democracy and shut people out of the process and decide who can and cannot vote.

From now through Election Day, the Reform Movement and our allies will be vigorously defending the right to vote and access to the polls, and we'll be doing our part to encourage and ensure high voter turnout.

# How does COVID-19 create issues with voting?

- People standing in long lines for hours waiting to vote, not socially distanced and some not wearing masks
- Fewer poll workers
- Fewer polling places
- So many people requested absentee ballots, not all received them
- Transportation issues
- Having to go farther to vote





## What Happened in Georgia and Wisconsin at Their Most Recent Elections?

- Absentee ballots were too late or did not arrive at all
- Polling places were closed or moved due to lack of poll workers
- Long lines - waiting for hours
- Machines broke
- Some people were told they could not vote because polls closed while they waited.
- Tubs of absentee ballots were found at Wisconsin post offices  
<https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/elections-commission-still-searching-for-answers-on-tubs-of-absentee-ballots-from-april-7-election/>



# Wisconsin Election, April 7, 2020

- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, 15 other US states cancelled or postponed their elections or primaries at the time of our election.
- Democratic lawmakers made several attempts to postpone the election but were prevented by Republican legislators.
- Gov. Evers called special session, but Republican leaders gaveled in and out within 17 seconds, criticizing the Governor for attempting to postpone the election and not calling a special session earlier.
- An Executive Order to postpone the election was blocked by the conservative State Supreme Court.

# Wisconsin Election, April 7, 2020

- SCOTUS blocked attempt to extend deadline for mailing absentee ballots.
- Many voters did not receive their requested absentee ballots.
- Some people were unable to get a required witness signature.
- Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel called the election the most undemocratic in the state's history, and put at risk everything gained from 3 weeks of staying home and keeping our distance.
- Our election debacle made national headlines and was shown on cable channels across the country and in Europe.

# How can people vote safely during the pandemic?

- ❖ Curbside voting
- ❖ Early voting
- ❖ Expand vote-by-mail/absentee voting
- ❖ Ensure sufficient voting locations, especially in rural and tribal area



## What can I do?

Contact Gov. Evers and your state legislators.  
Let them know you want safe elections during the pandemic.

<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

See previous presentation entitled “Effecting Change” for suggestions on how to write advocacy letters, send letters to the newspapers, use ResistBot. On CEEW website and J&CE Facebook page.

# How to request an absentee ballot

<https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>

What else can you do?

- ✓ Check to see if you are registered to vote
- ✓ Check your address
- ✓ Find the date of your next election
- ✓ Find your polling place
- ✓ View your voting history
- ✓ Find who your elected officials are
- ✓ Preview your next ballot
- ✓ Update your name or address
- ✓ Track your absentee ballot from request to delivery
- ✓ Register to vote

**Next Week's Topic:**

**Managing Stress in a Global Pandemic  
and a Changing World**

Tuesday, July 28th  
Moderated by Pati Allen Brickman

## Future Topics:

- ❖ **Gerrymandering - The importance of “fair maps” and how to achieve them**
- ❖ **Social Action in Action - CEEW Social Action Committee**
- ❖ **Bridging a Divide - How to talk with people who don't agree with you.**
- ❖ **Every Voice, Every Vote - How your congregation can get involved - the Reform Movement's Civic Engagement Campaign**
- ❖ **White Privilege - What is it and why does it matter?**
- ❖ **Criminal Justice & Prison Reform**
- ❖ **Open Forum - Air your own concerns about current events.**