

Rabbi Rick Jacobs
President

October 19, 2018
10 Cheshvan 5779

Mina Wender, President
Temple Oheb Shalom
7310 Park Heights Ave
Baltimore, MD 21208-5436

Dear Mina,

Thank you for being in touch with our team from the URJ. We want to express our admiration of you, Mina, for your steadfast leadership in such a hard time. When one volunteers to serve their community, nobody signs up for what you are going through. You and your Board have responded to a challenging situation with exactly the right approach - always keeping the best interests of the congregation front and center. Oheb Shalom has been an important part of the URJ for over 150 years; we need to continue to work together to make sure that your future is as distinguished as your past.

Per conversations with our team, we wanted to clarify a few important points.

1. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has suspended Rabbi Steven Fink. Per their rules, as a suspended rabbi, if Steven Fink works in any rabbinic setting it becomes grounds for immediate expulsion by the CCAR.
2. We have every confidence in the CCAR process. We believe it is fair to all involved. And although we would agree that, like any complex process, there is always room for improvement, as a member of the CCAR Rabbi Fink agreed to be bound by *this* Ethic Code and by *this* process.
3. Regarding a URJ congregation retaining a suspended or expelled rabbi, URJ does not have any congregations in which this scenario has occurred. While the URJ recently had congregations that have considered retaining a Rabbi suspended or expelled from the CCAR, those congregations realized that it was not appropriate, and ultimately did not retain that Rabbi.
4. As for membership status in the URJ for a congregation that chooses to have an ongoing relationship with a suspended or expelled CCAR rabbi, there is no current policy on this because it is unprecedented. No congregation has chosen to do this. We would not accept the application of a new congregation whose Rabbi was suspended or who continued to recognize that Rabbi in its letterhead

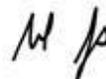
As such - if the membership of Oheb Shalom were not to ratify the board's decision to terminate Steven Fink's contract, the congregation puts itself in a community of only itself as no other congregation has chosen to do this. Additionally, Oheb Shalom risks their own expulsion from the URJ if a policy is enacted. Simply put, a "no" vote rejects 165 years of Reform Jewish membership and turns its back on an entire movement.

Mina, as you know, this moment is about what kind of community Oheb Shalom chooses to be. We hope and pray the congregation will follow the Board's impressive leadership and send a clear message that it will not accept anything other than a commitment to the highest ethical standards.

Shabbat Shalom,



Daryl Messinger
Chair of the Board



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