

The Jewish Federations of North America represents 157 Jewish federations and 400 independent Jewish communities across North America. The Jewish Federations of North America Washington Office brings the federations' voice to Capitol Hill and the White House by advocating for life-saving and life-enhancing humanitarian assistance in nearly 800 locations in the United States, Israel, and 60 other countries around the world.

2009 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Responding to the economic crisis— The Jewish Federations works with Congress and the Administration to ensure that our country's social service network has the necessary resources to treat the most vulnerable. Providing timely, temporary, and targeted funds to increase the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and Social Services Block Grant, supporting non-profit infrastructure projects, creating targeted charitable tax incentives, securing job retraining funds, offering new community service opportunities, and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, should all be in the economic stimulus plan.

Protecting Medicaid and the health safety net— In an effort to serve the most vulnerable in our communities, The Jewish Federations advocates for improving the quality and delivery of Medicaid and Medicare, while ensuring these programs remain fiscally and programmatically sound. The Jewish Federations supports enhanced access to healthcare for the uninsured and finding creative solutions for uncompensated care at health facilities.

Securing federal funding for community programs— The Jewish Federations garners federal support for innovative projects developed by The Jewish Federations, such as Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) supportive service programs, the Family Caregiver Access Network (FCAN), and other community-based initiatives supporting human services.

Empowering older Americans to live healthier, more independent, & more engaged lives— The Jewish Federations enhances quality of life for older adults by building support to:

- Enhance home and community-based services, improve the Older Americans Act, and strengthen the Community Innovation for Aging in Place Program;
- Expand access to and quality of transportation and affordable housing for seniors;
- Strengthen our nation's long-term care infrastructure;
- Increase support and relief for family caregivers; and
- Promote innovative Baby Boomer retirement policies.

Maximizing incentives for charitable giving— The Jewish Federations supports expansion of a permanent IRA Charitable Rollover, as well as the introduction of new tax incentives for charitable giving such as eliminating the income limitations on gifts to qualified charities and increasing the mileage reimbursement rate for volunteer drivers. The Jewish Federations opposes burdensome new tax requirements and impediments to nonprofit governance, operations and fundraising, particularly those relating to Donor Advised Funds and Supporting Organizations.

Promoting the interests of the Jewish federation system in international affairs— The Jewish Federations works with Congress and the Administration to promote US-Israel relations, protect Jews around the world, advocate against Iran becoming a nuclear power, and foster energy independence for the United States. The Jewish Federations supports divestment from Iran and Sudan.

Safeguarding the Jewish community from terrorism— To increase preparedness and mitigate risks to the Jewish community that have risen since 9/11, The Jewish Federations developed and champions the Department of Homeland Security's Nonprofit Security Grant Program and the integration of nonprofits within the overall homeland security infrastructure.

Sustaining community services to alleviate poverty— The Jewish Federations advocates for assistance for economically vulnerable Jews and others in need. The Jewish Federations supports critical programs such as the Community Services Block Grant, the Workforce Investment Act, the Community Development Block Grant, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The Jewish Federations promotes efforts to combat domestic hunger, stock food banks and soup kitchens, and support affordable housing.

Advocating on behalf of persons with disabilities and/or mental illness— The Jewish Federations supports full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, affordable and accessible supportive housing units and other home- and community-based services, respite care, and job training for persons with disabilities. The Jewish Federations promotes programs that assist with mental health needs and provide adequate research and funding to better understand and address Alzheimer's disease in seniors and developmental disabilities, particularly the autism spectrum disorder in children.

Speaking out for children— The Jewish Federations raises awareness on a wide range of children and youth issues that intersect with the federation system, including day school and early childhood education, after-school programs, and sufficient funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Programs.

Coordinating rapid and effective disaster and personal emergency relief— The Jewish Federation system maintains an extensive network of service providers who can quickly mobilize, coordinate, and deliver funds, personnel, and trauma counseling to areas affected by disasters. The Jewish Federations works with federal, state, and local government and community service organizations to ensure disaster relief is appropriately targeted. As a national board member of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, The Jewish Federations supports short-term emergency assistance for individuals and families.

Assisting immigrants and refugees— The Jewish Federations continues to work with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and other partners to extend refugees' access to public benefits. The Jewish Federations advocates for funding for naturalization and English as a Second Language, reducing inefficiencies in the naturalization process, and streamlining the path to citizenship for eligible applicants.

KEY LEGISLATIVE STAFF:

William Daroff, Vice President for Public Policy & Director of the Washington Office,
William.Daroff@jewishfederations.org

Robert Goldberg, Senior Director, Legislative Affairs, Rob.Goldberg@jewishfederations.org

Stephan Kline, Managing Director, National Agency Relations & Public Policy,
Stephan.Kline@jewishfederations.org

Amy Aarons Rosen, Senior Legislative Associate, Amy.Rosen@jewishfederations.org

Jonathan Westin, Assistant Director, Legislative Affairs, Jonathan.Westin@jewishfederations.org