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Com. or Disabled

Bliss


RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

August 17, 1988
4 Elul 5748

Mrs. Judith Yoffie
520 Grafton Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Dear Judy:

Thank you for calling me and keeping me abreast of the developments in your Committee. Its new mandate has given it new life and meaning and I am glad that this work is in your capable hands.

You ought to know, that I am running around the country trying to raise substantial sums for the Liheyot Program, so far with but limited success. Although, here and there I have been striking a responsive chord which should yield some response.

The attached brochure might be of interest to you if you have not seen it already.

Warm good wishes.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

Common
Annotated

Tell Sternberger
OK

Called

Taped
Message

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
2027 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 (202) 232-4242

MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL
Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger
Director

1/p.

FAX COVER SHEET

FROM: Rabbi Sternberger

TO: Rabbi Alex Schindler

FAX NO. 212 - 570 - 0895

COMMENTS: Please deliver upon Receipt
to Rabbi Schindler

4 pages includes cover

OUR FAX NUMBER IS 202-483-6550



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
2027 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 232-4242 Fax: (202) 483-6560

MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL
Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger
Director

John F. Lippmann
Regional President

May 2, 1989

To: Rabbi Alexander Schindler
From: Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger
Re: Sign on Letter for Americans with Disabilities Act

Attached is a letter we are asking top religious leaders to sign on. For a number of years the issue of discrimination against people with disabilities has been of concern to the religious community, and support for the Americans with Disabilities Act is an excellent opportunity for our advocacy.

Strategically, it is the issue of discrimination against people with AIDS that makes this advocacy critical. The consensus strategy in Washington is to combine AIDS advocacy and disabilities advocacy this year, and to keep low visibility on the AIDS issue until the right wing attacks.

Hence, the attached sign on letter includes the AIDS issue, but sets it in a broader context. We will send the letter to the Hill but will not plan major press work at this time. Instead, we will wait for an attack and plan to refer to this letter in press work in the counter-attack.

Please call the Washington office of the United Church of Christ, Office for Church in Society, at 202-543-1517 or if it would be easier, I will do it. They also need your signature which we have on file at the RAC. I would be happy to take care of that too. There is a May 5th deadline.

Looking forward to seeing you at the end of the month.

Youth Director
Harriet Sturm

UAHC Chairman
Allan Goldman

Administrative Assistant
Dairde D. Henry

Outreach Coordinator
Elizabeth H. Farquhar

UAHC President
Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

As religious leaders we confess we have not been as vocal on this issue as we should, and we now call for an end to discrimination against this part of the human family. ...

The American with Disabilities Act provides that an individual with a disability must be given equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement in the most integrated setting appropriate to the individual's needs. We urge you to support this bill, or similar legislation, that protects the rights of the disabled by helping to insure that all members of this society are allowed to participate on an equal basis.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



This letter is intended to be signed by heads of communion, one per denomination. For questions or comments, please call Jay Lintner, Denise Rozell, or the Office for Church in Society (UCC) office at 543-1517. Dead line to assemble the letter with signatures: May 5.

The Honorable (Senator/Representative)
United States Senate/House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator/Mr./Ms.:

We, the undersigned representatives of denominations and faith groups in the United States, are deeply concerned about the discrimination daily faced by individuals with physical or mental disabilities. Such discrimination can be found in every segment of life in this society. Although there have been some improvements in the last few years, largely due to protections afforded by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, such discrimination remains a pervasive problem for over 42 million disabled Americans.

As members of faith groups, it is our responsibility to strengthen and heal one another within the human family. The unity of the family is broken where any are left out or are subject to unequal treatment or discrimination. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Corinthians 12:26). Those with physical and mental disabilities have for too long been the target of such suffering, prejudice and discrimination effectively denying them the opportunity to compete on an equal basis for all of the rights, privileges and opportunities that are afforded to others as members of this society.

We write today to express our support for strong federal legislation addressing these issues, particularly in the private sector where much of that discrimination now takes place. We urge that you support legislation to protect the rights of persons with disabilities including particular attention to the problem of discrimination in employment, communications, access to public services, and public accommodations. One such piece of legislation recently introduced in Congress which appears to us to meet our principles is the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1989*. This legislation provides protection against discrimination for individuals with disabilities similar to protection provided other minorities in current civil rights law.

We also want to make clear our support for inclusion of those infected by the HIV virus and people living with AIDS. We concur with *The Report of the Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic*:

As long as discrimination occurs, and no strong national policy with rapid and effective remedies against discrimination is established, individuals who are infected with HIV will be reluctant to come forward for testing, counseling, and care. This fear of potential discrimination will limit the public's willingness to comply with the collection of epidemiological data and other public health strategies, will undermine our efforts to contain the HIV epidemic, and will leave HIV-infected individuals isolated and alone. Discrimination against persons with HIV infection in the workplace setting, or in areas of housing, schools, and public accommodations is unwarranted because it has no

Replied

September 9, 1987
15 Elul 5747

Ms. Sharon Ann Dror
NCJD Secretary/Treasurer
P.O. Box 645
Burtonsville, MD 20866

Dear Ms. Dror:

Thank you for your recent letter introducing the National Congress of Jewish Deaf to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. We of the Union have long been aware of the problems of the deaf. We have tried to be of assistance to members of our community who have hearing problems or total deafness. At major meetings and conventions we have signers and we use our camp network to aid Jewish youngsters who cannot hear. We also teach our children who are not hearing-impaired basic sign language to help them communicate with deaf children.

In the area of the disabled, we have formed a committee to help find ways and means of making the synagogues, its programs and facilities more available to the disabled. Our department of education has also created a very special program called Liheyot which is seeking to aid parents and families of special needs learners to bring quality religious education to young people who require the kind of service not readily available in our religious schools. I am taking the liberty of sharing your letter with both of these offices so they may be aware of your service and the possibility of working with the National Congress of Jewish Deaf.

Affiliation with the UAHC is on the basis of congregations. Indeed, Temple Beth Solomon of The Deaf, your host for your 1988 convention in California, is a member-congregation of the UAHC. While we cannot invite the National Congress to affiliate with our Union, there are many ways in which I am certain we will be able to work together to benefit those of our community who are deaf or hearing impaired.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

*BCC: RABBI HOWARD BOGOT
MRS. JUDITH YOFFIE*



A national organization advocating religious, cultural ideas and fellowship for Jewish deaf.
Affiliated with WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWISH DEAF

17th Biennial Convention at Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, California • Host: Temple Beth Solomon of the Deaf
July 31 to August 6, 1988

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September 2, 1987

UAHC

838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear President:

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the National Congress of Jewish Deaf, a national organization serving Jewish Deaf individuals. This organization was established in 1956 to serve as an umbrella to Jewish organizations of the deaf. Since then, it has grown to include 18 affiliates. Its goals are to aid in the growth and preservation of the religious spirit among Jewish deaf persons, to foster fellowship along the Jewish Deaf community, to promote cultural growth keeping within the framework of Jewish ideals, and to develop closer relations and understanding between Jews and non-Jews.

The Board would like to work with your organization to improve the quality of life for the Jewish population, including deaf and hearing impaired individuals.

Can you send us materials and information about becoming affiliated with your organization?

Thank you for your time and efforts. Wishing you all a very happy and healthy new year.

L'Shana Tova,

Sharon Ann Dror
NCJD Secretary/Treasurer
P.O. Box 645
Burtonsville, MD 20866

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

December 23, 1985

Robert M. Koppel

Charles J. Rothschild, Jr.; Albert Vorspan

Com - or disabled

The enclosed letter from Mrs. Bill Yoffie to Chuck Rothschild is self-explanatory.

Judy has a point. We can't tell temples to be heedful of the needs of the disabled without doing something about it right here at the Union.

As far as access to the building is concerned, I believe the security gates are wide enough now to allow a wheelchaired visitor to enter.

But, to the best of my knowledge, Judy is right in asserting that there is not a single solitary restroom at 838 that is equipped to handle a wheelchair. We ought to provide such a bathroom for men and/or women or unisex somewhere in the building. If possible, on more than one floor but certainly at the ground level.

Some of the funds set aside for building repairs ought to be made available for this purpose.

I'd also appreciate it if you were to look over the structure as a whole to see whether something else should not and could not be done.

Thanks.

*12/26 note RK getting prices on renovation
lobby floor washroom.
2/19 nothing yet*

cc: AMS
Myron Schoen
Bob Kojal

Mrs. William A. Yoffie
520 Grafton Street • Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545

December 8, 1985

Dear Chuck,

As a new member of the Board of Trustees I am still unfamiliar with the lines of communication, so I am going directly to the top with my request.

I presume you heard that the workshop on the Disabled at the Biennial was quite successful. In fact the attendance was far beyond my expectation, and questions and constructive suggestions were excellent. However, one very embarrassing question was asked - is the House of Living Judaism barrier-free?

To the best of my knowledge, there is not one rest room at 838 that is equipped to handle a wheel chair. While there are many pressing problems on the Board agenda, I do feel this one must be addressed. How can a National Task Force ask our constituency to do what we have not done?

over -

I do hope you will pass this problem along
to the appropriate committee for immediate
consideration.

I would appreciate being informed of action
on this.

Sincerely,

Judy Yoffie

Chair. Task Force on the
Disabled





איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Commission on Synagogue Administration

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS—CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

Myron E. Schoen, F.T.A.
Director

Dr. Harold J. Tragash
Chairman

UAHC Task Force on the Disabled

Meeting of November 1, 1984

at

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
New York City

- A. Mrs. Judy Yoffie, the Chairperson, welcomed the following who were present: Bertram L. Bassuk, Bettijane L. Eisenpreis, Jane Evans, Robert Swire, Sidney Sisk, Rabbi Howard Bogot, Paul Reichenbach and Myron E. Schoen.
- B. On August 7, 1984 Mrs. Yoffie and Mr. Schoen met with Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler to discuss the Task Force program. He urged an integration of the program of the UAHC's Education Department as well as the camping and youth departments. As a result, Rabbis Howard Bogot and Allen Smith and Paul Reichenbach had been appointed to the Task Force as staff liaison for their particular departments.
- C. Rabbi Howard Bogot introduced LIHEYOT, the national curriculum project's program related to special needs learners which is designed to accomplish the following:
 1. Provide greater accessibility to Jewish education for the learning disabled, physically handicapped, infirm aged, retarded, gifted, and those disadvantaged by coping difficulties.
 2. Enhance sensitivity among members of a Jewish school community to the special needs learner.

Pointing out that LIHEYOT means "becoming", Rabbi Bogot noted that the program is moving slowly but that the first goal (see 1 above) was "faster at being operational" than the second goal of "enhancing sensitivity". He expressed pleasure at the opportunity to join forces with the Task Force and stated that the Department of Education needs help in:

- a) identifying the special needs learners
- b) organizing non-professional volunteers to assist in making the program operational
- c) training the professionals and non-professionals to implement the program

Meeting Nov. 1, 1984 (Continued)

- D. Paul Reichenbach, speaking for himself and Rabbi Allan Smith, Director of the Youth Department, noted that the Camp Department had determined to study the need and feasibility of each camp specializing in programming for the disabled. A half-page ad was placed in the Fall 1984 edition of REFORM JUDAISM (page 28) in an effort to reach the more than 200,000 homes of members of UAHC congregations. While this effort was deemed a good public relations effort to heighten sensitivity, there were only twenty (20) responses. The conclusions are that parents in our congregations find private programs; they shy away from public institutions; parents have a preference to mainstream their children. However, NFTY and the UAHC camps have had and will continue to be involved with children who are physically and emotionally disabled. A program for the non-hearing sponsored by the N.Y. Federation of Reform Synagogues at Kutz Camp has handled ten (10) young people from around the country. The Olin-Sang-Ruby camp has had children ranging from mild disabilities to a quadriplegic. SOFTY camp in Mississippi works with children from the Easter Seal Foundation and the Texas camp hosts those with head trauma. The leadership of NYFTY has an ongoing program of sensitizing its members to the disabled. While it would seem that our constituency at this time has found services to meet their basic needs, the camp and youth departments will continue to be alert to the situation and to reach out positively as needs are identified.
- E. At adjournment, Mrs. Yoffie advised that she has accepted Rabbi Schindler's bid to attend the UAHC Board of Trustees meeting on December 1-2 and report on the efforts of the Task Force.

Respectfully submitted
Myron E. Schoen, F.T.A.

The Disabled in the Jewish Community

by

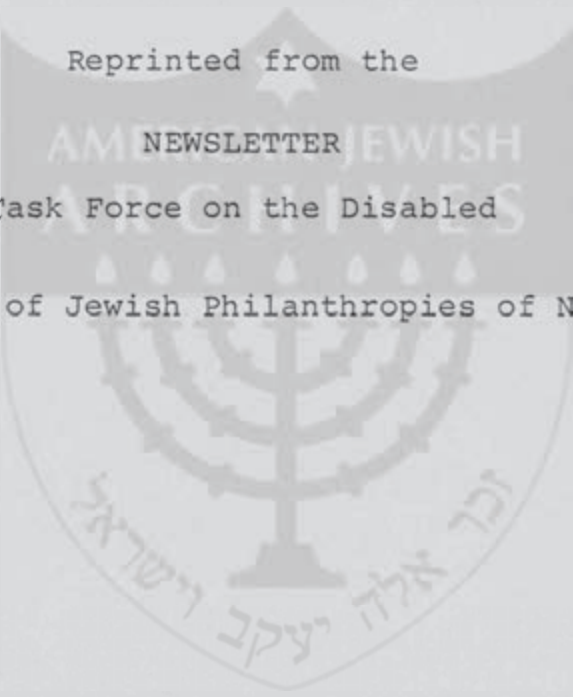
Robert Goodman

Reprinted from the

AMERICAN JEWISH
NEWSLETTER

Task Force on the Disabled
ARCHIVES

Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York



Task Force on the Disabled
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

For those of you who are not disabled and attend shul regularly, look around next Shabbat. How many disabled persons will you see? How many are blind? How many are deaf or hearing impaired? How many use wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches? Think back to your families. How many have become disabled by age or accident? If you live long enough, all of you could become disabled.

What has kept the disabled from fully participating? Was it steps, lack of sign language interpreters, negative attitudes, or the lack of large print siddurim or chumashim (prayer books or bibles)? There are thousand of persons with disabilities who face these barriers to full participation in the Jewish community.

Thousands of disabled people receive no services; thousands more cannot participate fully within the Jewish community, and eventually many are turned off to being Jewish.

A young lady with a disability who couldn't get a Jewish education or go to shul because of inaccessible facilities, turned to Jews for Jesus because they offered her "friendship," "acceptance," and a chance to study the "bible."

A child who wanted to attend a Jewish camp for the disabled but was unable to get a scholarship from the Jewish community, found herself in a Christian camp for the disabled for a third of the price, struggling to stay Jewish.

A young Orthodox man was experiencing dating difficulties which led him to join non-religious groups which met on shabbat in order to make social contacts.

Disabled children are being kept out of religious schools and denied a Jewish education because of architectural and attitudinal barriers.

In the United States there are no laws requiring synagogues and religious schools to be made accessible. It is up to individual synagogues, and schools to make their facilities fully accessible. Attitudes must also be changed for they are the key to correcting the concrete barriers. The disability movement has not yet fully or effectively reached the Jewish community.

For those who have disabilities, being part of a religious community, can represent a special kind of emotional and spiritual support.

It is natural to be afraid of that which is different or not understood. Often the public's perception of physical or mental disabilities exaggerates the limitations they impose.

What is it that is uniquely Jewish that promotes a negative attitude toward the disabled person?

The negative attitudes come from a variety of sources. Helen Epstein, in her book, Children of the Holocaust, explained that parents who came to North America from Nazi Europe felt that their children should not have to suffer. They themselves, if not physically handicapped by their concentration camp experience were certainly emotionally impaired. They felt a disabled spouse would mean undue hardship and problems for their children.

In 1976, Rabbi Edward Kaminetsky, Ph.D., psychologist and special educator, in his book, Sins of Omission: The Neglected Children, gives the origins of the Jewish social philosophy and it's practical application concerning the rights of the disabled.

In summarizing the Jewish attitude toward the disabled, Rabbi Kaminetsky says, "All individuals are considered to have been created in G-d's image and the basic rights of the individual cannot be waived even for the sake of the entire community. The right of the disabled to protection from any form of harm or abuse could also not be compromised."

AMERICAN JEWISH

Physically handicapped persons were disqualified from performing priestly functions in the Temple. Having the slightest blemish prevented one from officiating at any ceremony. The need to be a model for the populace demanded that the priests be dignified in appearance and exemplify the best before G-d and His people.

Kaminetsky says while there was this tendency to view the outward appearance of the disabled as a reflection of an unwholesome character or as punishment for a transgression, rabbinic leaders, several of whom were disabled individuals, consistently discouraged this view, pointing to the fact that the motives of G-d are beyond human comprehension. That the individual's natural endowments are often beyond his control, and that ultimately, only G-d judges the merits of an individual.

Exclusion from normal legal status and full integration into the community entailed only those activities with technical requirements with which the disabled could not comply due to limitations of communication and inability to understand such as in marriage and in the disposition and acquisition of property. Such exclusions were most apparent in the case of the cheres, a deaf-mute person who couldn't communicate or be communicated with, and the shoteh, a mentally disabled person.

Over the course of time there have been some modifications of these restrictions in response to technical and educational advances.

But still today rabbis are urging those who take the halacha, law, literally to "get out of the ivory towers, see what educational, social and technological advances have occurred, and make decisions based on reality." The previous Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Goren, said at a meeting of the World Congress of the Jewish Deaf in the summer of 1981, that the halachic status of the deaf is different now that the deaf can be educated to communicate with others and they are able to fully participate in society.

includes the superachievers who "overcome" their disabilities and excel in their chosen fields.

5. Disabled people are laughable. Visually impaired people are depicted as fumbling clutzes. "Mr. Magoo" comes to mind as an example of this.
6. The disabled person is his/her own worst and only enemy. Bitterness and self-pity prevent personal development.
7. Disabled people are seen as burdens to society and the cost of including them in society is seen as too high. By overstating costs and understating benefits, by presenting the narrow view instead of a broad range of perspectives, the media does a disservice to disabled and non-disabled people alike.
8. Disabled people are seen as non-sexual.
9. Disabled people are incapable of fully participating in everyday life.
10. Disabled people are sometimes presented more negatively because they are disabled (people with disabilities are evil or sinister, e.g.).
11. Conversely, disabled people are often presented more positively because of their disabilities (disabled people are courageous, brave and inspirational).
12. People are seen as visually impaired only if they use a cane or dog.
13. People who are hearing impaired are seen as dumb, unable to communicate with others.

TERMINOLOGY

Four-letter words are offensive. So are some of the words used in referring to people with disabilities. The words used in articles can affect the attitudes the general public acquires toward people with disabilities. Society's misconceptions about people with disabilities are reinforced by negative terms. Continued use of words like "cripple," "spastic," "idiot," "loony," "victim," "dumb," and "insane" contribute to the negative self-images of people with disabilities and perpetuate negative attitudes and practices. By choosing words carefully, a journalist can keep people with disabilities from sounding pitiful, inhuman or, in the words of a United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCPA) brochure, from being viewed as beings from outer space.

A journalist may use a word that he/she is accustomed to using and may not realize the impact of that word. These are words that we all use. They are used every day in speaking and writing. Language is the most accurate way of expressing attitudes and feelings. Choosing a particular word makes a statement about how someone feels toward another person or thing. The terminology suggested in this guide will improve reporting.

People with disabilities have rights too. And most of all the right of self-esteem.

One way of ensuring this right, suggests UCPA, is by consistent use of terminology when referring to those who have a disability, terminology which denotes dignity, merit and ability.

The following is a list of terms which are considered offensive and should not be used when referring to people with disabilities.

There is much controversy surrounding the words handicapped and disabled. The terms handicapped and disabled are used interchangeably by many people with disabilities. However, the term disabled is preferred by most.

Disabled is used to describe a person who has some form of limitation - physical, sensory or mental, or legalistic (denied civil rights and equality). A disability is the thing you always have. The word is used to refer to physical, mental, sensory and emotional impairments that interfere with the major tasks of daily living. When using this word don't say "He/She is disabled." Say a person or people with a disability or a disabled person. Cars are disabled; people have disabilities.

Handicap refers to the impact of the environment on a disability in a given situation. It is an external impediment or restricting force that keeps an individual from accomplishing an end. This term is seen by most people with disabilities as overwhelmingly negative when applied to an individual. In her book Access, Lilly Bruck reserves the word for a unique use: to denote an interaction between a disability and an environment in which the design of the environment erects obstacles or barriers to disabled people. "Thus iron gates outside supermarkets that are used to prevent shopping-cart theft handicap people who use wheelchairs by denying them a convenient exit." A vocational handicap is a disability that prevents a person from working. A long distance runner who loses a finger is disabled; he has a vocational handicap if he is also a violin player.

In relation to the differences between disability and handicap, one person put it this way: "Our bodies make us disabled, but society makes us handicapped."

The term impairment is often used. An impairment is a dysfunction or limitation such as an impairment of mobility or a sense. Do not use the word impaired to refer to a person. This implies that he/she is not up to par with the rest of society and falls short of the anticipated norm.

Able-bodied. This implies that someone is ~~more~~ capable than a disabled person and tells him "You are inferior." Non-disabled is better. This implies no comparison between a disabled person and non-disabled persons' abilities.

Afflicted. This is a very negative word. It is a medical term and implies suffering. A person who has or is affected by a particular disability is better. (e.g. a person who has muscular dystrophy, or a person who had a stroke.)

Arthritis. This is the proper term. A person has arthritis. Do not use words like struck down, old age disease, pitiful or crippled by when referring to persons with arthritis. Don't use inappropriate analogies like "the pain of arthritis is like a toothache."

Blind. Blind person or people with a visual disability or impairment, and sight disability are all acceptable substitutes for this term.

Cerebral palsied or palsied. This makes a person sound like an inanimate object. People with cerebral palsy sounds better. C.P. as in "He's a C.P." A person has cerebral palsy. Do not use this to describe a person.

Condition. This is a medical term when applied to a particular impairment. A cardiac disability is preferred to a heart condition.

Crazy, psycho, insane, maniac, wacko. These are very denegrating words and should never be used. Emotional or psychological disability or impairment, or emotional or psychological condition, or mentally restored are preferred terms.

Cripple, crippled, crippler. This paints a mental picture no one would look at, or of someone who can't do anything. These words should never be used. Use a specific name of a disability or orthopedic disability, mobility impairment or person with a disability, instead. Vehicles or airplanes are crippled, not people. Other negative words include cripp, blink and gimp.

Deaf and dumb, deaf-mute, the deaf. Use deaf person or people, persons who are deaf, hearing disability, deaf, hearing impaired, cannot speak and/or hear instead. Muteness is the inability to speak. The incidence of muteness is the same amongst both hearing and deaf people. A deaf person is not mute since he is able to speak but may not have learned to because he could not imitate sounds due to his deafness.

Disease. This word is used to describe a contagious condition. Cerebral palsy and other disabilities are not diseases. People with disabilities are as healthy as anyone else.

Drain and burden. Never use these words. UCPA recommends using added responsibility as a more positive and receptive alternative.

Epileptic. A better expression is a person who has epilepsy. Words like fit or spell are also inappropriate. A person has/had a seizure.

Homebound. This word is usually incorrectly applied and makes you think of someone bound or tied to his/her bed unable to get out. Mobility restricted is a better term to describe the situation.

Incapacity, incapacitated, incapacitating. These are medical terms which imply that a person is ill and not functioning at full capacity.

Invalid. This makes a person sound sickly, hopeless and incapable of functioning. The Random House Dictionary defines it as 1) an infirm or sickly person, 2) a person who is too sick, weak, or old to care for him-herself.

Maimed, Use disabled or the name of a specific disability instead.

Mongoloid. A person has Down's syndrome. He/she is not mongoloid.

Normal and abnormal. Be careful when using the word normal. What is normal? Everyone has their own definition. This refers to numbers not people. When used to describe a non-disabled person, it suggests that a disabled person is abnormal or subnormal.

Partially blind. A person with low vision is partially sighted, or partially seeing.

Patient. Hospitals and doctors have patients. People with disabilities are people. There is also a tendency to use patient when referring to someone needing home care services. Someone receiving home care is a client. Patient indicates that a person is in a medical environment.

Poor. Disability has nothing to do with how wealthy one is. Love and self-esteem are priceless qualities. One's character determines the richness of one's life.

Retard, retardate, idiot, imbecile, feeble-minded, backward, dummy, dull-witted. These are all very negative and derogatory terms. A better word is retarded. The best term is developmentally disabled or "has a developmental disability." It should not be used to describe a person who may, at times, appear or act awkward.

Spastic. This is another word that should never be used. Spasticity is one symptom of cerebral palsy. Use a person who has cerebral palsy instead. A lack of coordination should not be ridiculed.

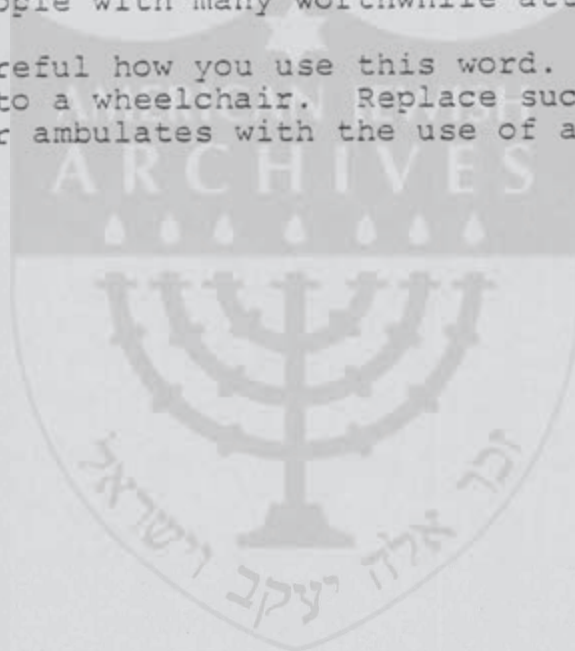
Unfortunate. What is unfortunate is that this word is part of our vocabulary. Don't offend anyone with this word.

Suffer, sufferer, suffering. To say that someone suffers from a disability means that he or she is in constant pain as a result of the disability. This is rarely the case. Again, use a person who has/had a particular disability.

Unfortunate. This implies unlucky, unsuccessful, or social outcast, and generates pity. Disabled people don't want pity and they only want to be regarded as real, likeable people.

Victim. A person with a disability was not necessarily sabotaged or in a plane, train or car crash. This word connotes that disability is a tragedy (another negative word); it is not. Don't use this word. Instead of saying stroke victim or polio victim, say a person who has/had a stroke or a person who has had polio, a person who has multiple sclerosis. Disabled people don't want to be considered helpless victims, but as people with many worthwhile attributes.

Wheelchair. Be careful how you use this word. Do not use phrases like confined or bound to a wheelchair. Replace such phrases with: a person who uses, or ambulates with the use of a wheelchair.



EQUAL ACCESS FOR DISABLED PERSONS

An accessible synagogue is one that has overcome two barriers: the physical or architectural barriers that make it difficult for persons with disabilities to enter, and the personal barriers that keep them from feeling welcome.

Attitudinal barriers, intensely psychological in nature, include the ones of embarrassment, of inability to respond helpfully, of fear of the symbolic meaning that a person with a physical disability has for others: "Is it catching?" "I don't want to be reminded of my own difficulties, even though they do not show."

An accessible synagogue in the personal area of acceptance, then, is one in which each member:

- Sees clearly his or her own psychological discomfort and is able to deal with it.

An architecturally accessible synagogue is one in which the building itself and the milieu of worship does not inhibit or prevent entrance or participation in the service by persons with disabilities. Accessibility means that basic program (not necessarily every room or unit) of the synagogue be available to persons with disabilities. Since synagogues define program as worship and education, the areas that must be open include the worship center - the sanctuary, the educational wing, the banquet or hall, the lounge, and the toilet.

The following check list may be helpful for synagogue boards or committees that would like to begin work on making the synagogue truly accessible to all.

Parking and Entrance

1. Parking spaces marked Reserved for the Handicapped. Spaces should be 12 feet wide to open door; no loose gravel.
2. Level approach to the synagogue and sidewalk to curb or curb ramps to street.
3. Ramps where there is a change in grade level and/or steps at some entrances.
 - Ramps where steps are unavoidable.
 - Non-slip surface material, not heavy carpet.
 - Minimum ramp width of 32 inches.
 - Rise of no more than one foot for 12 feet of ramp.
4. Handrails 32-38 inches wide, 30-32 inches high.
 - At inside/outside ramps
 - At inside-outside steps
 - In washrooms and toilets.
 - Where steps lead to the Holy Ark.

Doors

1. Entry doors 36-38 inches wide-at least one door.
2. Inside doors 30-32 inches clear opening.
3. Doors swing without conflict with wheelchairs. It is easier to open a door inward.
4. Vertical door handles or horizontal door bars, rather than slippery round knobs.
5. Blunt doorsills.
6. Sliding doors with recessed lower channel. These are even better than some swinging doors for wheelchairs.

Corridors

1. At least 36 inches wide. It takes at least 54 inches to turn a wheelchair.
2. Nonslip floors.

Sanctuary

1. Accommodations for those on crutches or with walkers. One or two pews or rows 32 inches apart.
2. Accommodations for wheelchairs by removing some pews near the front, allowing space to maneuver comfortably.
3. Non-slip floors

Rest Rooms

1. Entry 30-32 inches wide.
2. At least one stall 5 feet deep in the Men's and Women's rooms wide enough for a wheelchair 38 inches wide; and slide curtain or door that swings out.
3. Grab bars in the toilet seat stall, 30 inches high, extending 24 inches from midway of the commode, in the urinal stall, the bar fixed vertically to stabilize one on crutches.
4. One washbasin 30 inches high for wheelchairs.
5. Faucets easily handled with one hand.

Water Fountains

1. Spouts, controls up front.
2. Not in an alcove.
3. Hand or foot operated. Conventional water coolers can be improved by mounting a small fountain on the side, 30 inches from the floor.

Transportation Barriers

1. Parking near entrance of synagogue.
2. Volunteer drivers and cars for synagogue activities.
3. Volunteer drivers with vans with wheelchair ramps.
4. Van with power lift for wheelchairs. This is necessary for people unable to transfer from chair to car. The lack of manageable transportation is a severe limit to participation in synagogue activities for many.

Lighting

1. Adequate light at book level in all pews or rows.
2. Light from below the speaker's face to enliven and facilitate speech reading.
3. Sight lines to speaker's face without glaring, bothersome lights.
4. Sight lines to speaker's face without glaring window light. Flickering, scintillating light causes increased fatigue for most visual or hearing impaired people.
5. Braille prayerbooks and bibles.
6. Large print prayerbooks for the partially sighted.

Amplification

1. A good sound system without dead spots.
2. Earphones in some pews for the hard of hearing.
3. Interpreter in sign language for the deaf.

Attitudinal Barriers

1. Do deaf persons feel welcome in your synagogue?
2. Do severely retarded people participate in your synagogue?
3. Severely disabled people often have visible abnormalities that cause people to stare and to talk about them in a pitying manner. This hurts the self image of the disabled person and could result in withdrawal.
4. Does your synagogue offer positive role models by having disabled persons as active leaders?
5. Does your synagogue have a volunteer program of willing and able but not necessarily "able-bodied" people ready to respond to the urgent needs of others?
6. What other attitudinal barriers do you observe within your congregation? Within society? What can you do to overcome these in your synagogue and school?

Adapted from Access Sabbath/Sunday's "What is an Accessible Church"
by Harold Wilke.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

August 7, 1984

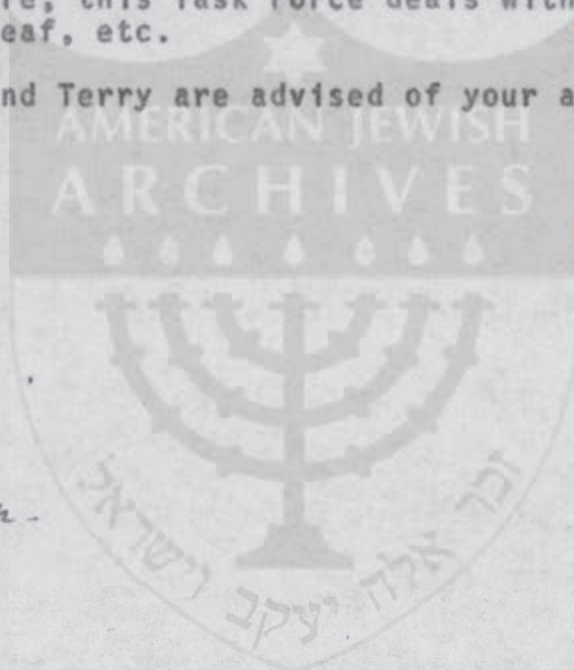
Rabbis Allan Smith and Daniel B. Syme
Terry Bobrow and Myron E. Schoen

TASK FORCE ON DISABLED

It is important that this Task Force have a representative from our Education Department and Youth and Camp Division. Will you both give thought to the staff person to be assigned to this Task Force in behalf of your respective departments. As you are undoubtedly aware, this Task Force deals with the physically disabled, blind, deaf, etc.

Be sure Myron and Terry are advised of your appointee.

Paul Reichert
Mitchell Warren



Comm. on
Disables

April 26, 1984

Mrs. William Yoffie
520 Grafton Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Dear Judy:

The enclosed article may interest you in connection with your work for disabled people.

As I understand it, the charge of your Committee was rather narrow in the past. At least this is reflected in the resolutions which have emanated from this Committee to the Biennial, which call on the Union and our congregations to have the proper facilities for people in wheelchairs at our various functions. As I envisioned the Committee, its mandate should be much wider. It should encompass, for example, the work of the several congregations for the deaf sponsored by the Union in several communities. What are we doing for the blind and need we do something special for them that is not being covered by such institutions as the Jewish Braille Institute or the Jewish Guild for the Blind. What about children who are learning disabled or even mentally handicapped. Are we doing enough for them in our religious schools and camps and what should we consider doing.

These thoughts are not directed in any sense, merely suggestions which you can then take up with your Committee.

With fondest regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Charles J. Rothschild, Jr.
Albert Vorspan
Myron E. Schoen

Com. on Disabled

W. Joffe
Mrs. William A. Yoffie

520 Grafton Street . Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545

May 10, 1984

Dear Alex,

Please accept my apology for this overdue response to your letter.

I had hoped that we would have had our initial meeting of the Task Force on the Disabled by now. Unfortunately the response to the May 8 meeting dictated a change of date to June 13. I am not a procrastinator, as I hope you know, so this delay distresses me very much. I intend to meet with Myron on the 13th regardless of the number of people who can attend. We do have to get started on the program.

I do hope Rhea and the children are well. Please give Rhea my best.

Sincerely,

Judy

COPY

4
December 13, 1983

Mrs. William A. Yoffie
520 Grafton St.
Shrewsbury, Mass. 10545

Dear Mrs. Yoffie:

As the new Chairman of the Board, I am reviewing our committee structure and appointing new chair people. I would like you to accept the Chairmanship of our Task Force on the Disabled. The primary function of this task force is to assist congregations in making worship and program functions and facilities accessible to those whose sight, hearing or mobility is impaired. Myron Schoen is the staff person with whom you will work. I know you are on our Synagogue Administration Commission and have worked with Myron in this area.

With the aging of our population, the work of this task force becomes more relevant and more important. I am sure that you will find this task very enjoyable and rewarding. I will await word from you that you have accepted this assignment.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Rothschild, Jr.
Chairman

CJR:ms

bc: Rabbi A. Schindler ✓

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

October 6, 1982

Albert Vorspan

Al, did the Committee on the Disabled mandated by the Biennial ever convene? I vaguely remember your telling me about it. I assume that they will have a report ready by the time the Biennial rolls around. In any event, even prior to that would it not be advisable were they to have some recommendations to our congregations as to what should minimally be done for the disabled. Please keep me posted.

Have
TV person

MEMORANDUM

From Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
To Albert Vorspan
Copies
Subject

no further
Date October 6, 1982

Al, did the Committee on the Disabled mandated by the Biennial ever convene? I vaguely remember your telling me about it. I assume that they will have a report ready by the time the Biennial rolls around. In any event, even prior to that would it not be advisable were they to have some recommendations to our congregations as to what should minimally be done for the disabled. Please keep me posted.

→ *W. A. Vorspan*
Doing very well. Myron runs it. They'll report to the Biennial. Canvassing on congregations now



Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

Edith J. Miller

July 28, 1982

Theodore K. Broido

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE DISABLED

*New file
Spec signed*

Jane Heskins (Mrs. Donald) of Jamestown, N.Y. has asked to be appointed to the Committee on the Disabled. Don Day asks that you send her a letter of appointment. Is Myron the staff person handling the work of this Committee? If so, please make certain he is apprised of her appointment and desire to work.



MEMORANDUM

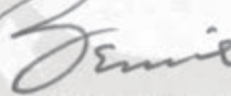
From Rabbi Bernard M. Zlotowitz
To Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Copies Al Vorspan
Subject

Date July 8, 1982

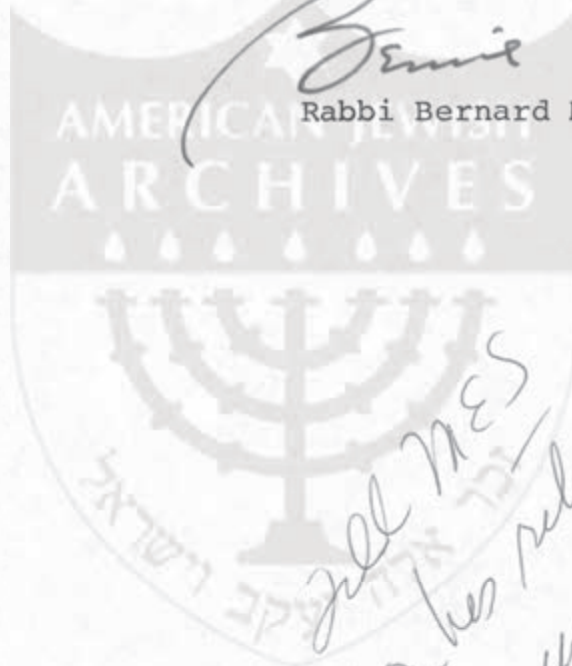
Dear Alex:

During the CCAR, you asked me to remind you to appoint Jane Heskins to the National Committee for the Disabled.

Warmly,



Rabbi Bernard M. Zlotowitz



*Will MES
on her return
August*

BMZ:ac



Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

2/19/82

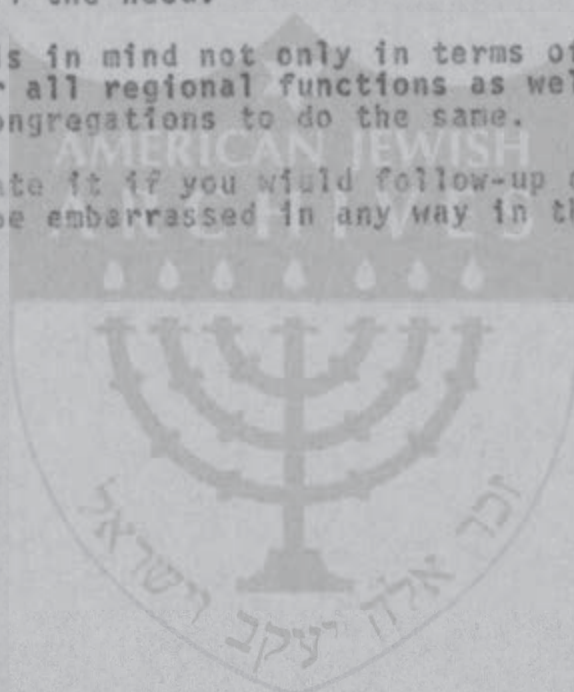
Al Vorspan

Theodore K. Brofido; Rabbi Leonard Schoolman

You will recall that the Biennial resolution on Disabled Persons mandated us take steps in regard to rights and opportunities for the disabled. It enjoined us to change out procedures and to set-up a monitoring process to make certain that the Union and its congregations take all steps necessary to fill the need.

We must keep this in mind not only in terms of national meetings but for all regional functions as well. We must also urge our congregations to do the same.

I would appreciate it if you would follow-up on this. I do not want us to be embarrassed in any way in the future.



Don
responded re
MIM Comm.

Patrice refers to
Revolution as
Disabled

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

February 16, 1982

Rabbi Ramie Arian
Director
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Ramie:

Thanks so very much for your warm letter. I very much appreciate your comments about the youth delegates' participation at the Biennial.

Specifically with reference to the new Committee, that Committee has already been appointed. I did not appoint any youth delegates to the Committee. Primarily, it is a Committee which will be charged with a complete review of the proportional dues program and I felt that its composition should be constructed of those who are most directly affected by it.

Additionally, Ramie, there will be about six two day Meetings of the Committee over the next 18 months and I wonder whether any youth delegates would be in a position to devote that kind of time and commitment to its work.

Cordially

/s/ Don

Donald S. Day

DSD/mdr

cc: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler ✓
Mr. Theodore K. Broido



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEMPLE YOUTH
NFTY

February 8, 1982

Mr. Donald Day
Chairman of the Board, UAHC
1500 Liberty Bank Bldg.
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Mr. Day:

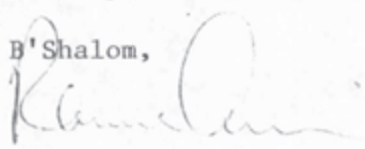
I am writing on behalf of those youth delegates who participated in the recent UAHC Biennial Convention, to thank you for the wonderful treatment which our young people received as delegates to the UAHC convention. As you know, there were some 220 youths in attendance, of whom about 175 were fully credentialed delegates from their congregations. I was very pleased to know that through full participation in the plenary sessions especially, and through briefings with several members of the UAHC staff, they had the opportunity to feel as though they were being treated as adults and to participate fully in every aspect of the convention. I appreciate your help, as chairman, in facilitating this atmosphere.

I was especially pleased to note that the resolution on disabled persons, introduced by NFTY, was passed by the General Assembly.

I think it would be particularly appropriate for there to be NFTY representatives on the monitoring committee which was mandated by this resolution. I hope that you will see fit to make such appointments when the committee is named. I will be happy to provide you with the names of suitable candidates, if you so desire.

NFTY will be very pleased to be helpful in the implementation of this important resolution. As always, please feel free to call upon me or upon any of our staff or young people, if there is any way in which we can be of special assistance.

B'Shalom,


Rabbie Ramie Arian,
Director

RA:lr