



CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS of Major American Jewish Organizations

To: Presidents and Executive Directors

From: Arthur Stark, Chairman

William C. Daroff, CEO

**Re: Suspension of Enforcement of Statement on Public
Discourse and Dismissal of Complaints**

After significant discussion and consideration by Conference leaders and member organizations, the Process and Procedures Committee unanimously voted on September 10, 2020, to suspend its adjudication and resolution of violations of the Statement on Public Discourse. The Rights and Responsibilities Committee co-chairs then dismissed all complaints pending before the Conference. On September 11, 2020, the Executive Council unanimously affirmed the suspension of the rule and the dismissal of the cases.

The Statement on Public Discourse remains in effect for all Conference organizations to aspire to follow. The Committees intend to explore other models to promote civil communal discourse over the months ahead.

These decisions reflect the recognition that while the Statement's goal of promoting organizational comity is laudable, as currently formulated, it is not practically enforceable by the Conference. In addition, the enforcement process results in more communal division than unity, and significant Conference time and resources are consumed by enforcement matters. These sentiments were cogently summarized by our mediator in a recent complaint:

The issues with which we are dealing – most notably, fairness, truth, and accuracy are largely in the eye of the beholder (particularly when each party believes the other party's position will endanger Jewish lives or will betray fundamental Jewish ethical teachings). And it seems to me that the Conference, even if it were to have a permanent standing committee to adjudicate such conflicts would only be able to reach conclusions that would lead to more, and possibly even more bitter, conflicts. People of good conscience looking at the same

information can and do reach very different conclusions on issues they frequently regard as being central to the survival of the Jewish people or central to leading a morally worthy life. I therefore question if it is desirable or advisable for the Conference to expend its time and resources to judge disputes that are not intrinsically resolvable by the Conference.

After the Process and Procedures Committee vote to suspend enforcement, the Rights and Responsibilities Committee co-chairs approved the following resolution dismissing pending complaints, without judging their substantive merits:

As the Conference of Presidents has suspended its enforcement of the Statement on Public Discourse, the Rules and Responsibilities Committee hereby dismisses with prejudice all pending complaints alleging violation of the Statement. This action is taken without judgment on the substantive merits of the complaints.

Member organizations will have an opportunity to affirm these Committee proceedings at the next General Meeting later this year.

Thank you.

AS

WCD

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