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Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel to Serve as Chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, Senator Scott Wiener Elected Vice Chair

Caucus Membership Expands Following Election Victories Across the State

SACRAMENTO, CA — The California Legislative Jewish Caucus announced today that Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino) has been elected by members of the caucus to serve as Chair for the 2021-2022 legislative session. Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) has been elected Vice Chair. In recent years, the Jewish Caucus has grown into an influential voice in the State Legislature, and will expand to at least 17 legislators following the election of Senators-Elect Josh Newman (D-Diamond Bar) and Josh Becker (D-San Mateo).

“I am grateful for the opportunity to lead the Jewish Caucus during these challenging times,” said Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel. “From its humble beginnings a few years ago, the Jewish Caucus has grown into an important voice in Sacramento, and we are poised to expand our impact in the new legislative session. As we address the devastating impacts of COVID-19, we will remain focused on our dual goals of advocating strongly for the Jewish community’s most important priorities, while also helping vulnerable Californians of all backgrounds through our *Tikkun Olam* agenda. I look forward to building on Senator Ben Allen’s excellent leadership over the past two years, and am excited to work with my colleagues to ensure that our community always has a seat at the table and a strong voice in the policymaking process.”

Jesse Gabriel was elected to the State Assembly in 2018. A longtime Jewish community activist, Gabriel has been an outspoken leader on issues related to hate crimes, antisemitism, and Jewish community security. Last session, he authored Assembly Bill (AB) 1548, which established the California Nonprofit Security Grant Program and provided \$15 million in security funding to institutions at risk of hate-motivated violence. Prior to joining the Legislature, Gabriel worked in the U.S. Senate, where he helped craft bipartisan Iran sanctions legislation that was signed into law in 2010. As an attorney in private practice, Gabriel sued the Trump Administration in two landmark lawsuits to protect Dreamers and the DACA program, and also successfully represented Holocaust survivors asserting claims against the German government for work performed in Nazi ghettos. He has served as a Board Member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and UCLA Hillel, and is an active member of Valley Beth Shalom (VBS) congregation in Encino.

"I am honored to assume the role of Vice Chair of the Jewish Caucus, and grateful to my colleagues for entrusting me with this responsibility," said Senator Wiener. "Growing up as one of the only Jewish kids in my town, I saw first-hand the critical importance of the Jewish community standing together to advocate for our values. It's a true privilege to serve alongside so many wonderful Jewish colleagues who embody the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam – repairing the world – and who fight for a more just world every day. We are facing an unprecedented time in our history, with so much to repair – a pandemic, rising inequality and poverty, racism, homophobia, and antisemitism, and so much more. The Jewish Caucus is a strong voice for justice, and we'll work hard to serve the people of California when it comes to facing these massive challenges."

Senator Scott Wiener represents San Francisco and northern San Mateo County in the California State Senate. Elected in 2016, Senator Wiener focuses extensively on housing, transportation, civil rights, criminal justice reform, clean energy, and alleviating poverty. Before his election to the Senate, Senator Wiener served as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, representing the district previously represented by Harvey Milk.

"I am very pleased to congratulate my good friends, Jesse Gabriel and Scott Wiener, on their election as chair and vice chair of the Jewish Caucus," said Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), the outgoing Jewish Caucus Chair. "I am proud of our caucus's accomplishments over the past 2 years, and am grateful for the friendship and partnership that I enjoyed with Assemblymember Gabriel as our vice chair. I am excited to see him step up into this new leadership role, with Senator Wiener alongside him, and look forward to supporting all the progress they will continue to make in this next term."

Since 2012, the Jewish Caucus has responded to the needs of California's diverse Jewish community and served as a voice for justice, equality, and progress in the State Legislature. In the past two years, under the leadership of Senator Allen and Assemblymember Gabriel, the Jewish Caucus has secured over \$65 million in state funding for various efforts, including rebuilding fire-ravaged Jewish summer camps, assisting Holocaust survivors, expanding the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, and improving security at vulnerable Jewish institutions. The Jewish Caucus also has advanced a robust legislative agenda, helped to remove anti-Jewish bias from a proposed ethnic studies curriculum, and brought a diverse group of 16 legislators to visit Israel.

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