

Union for Traditional Judaism

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March 20, 2009

Hon. Margaret M. Markey
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Ms. Markey:

The Torah repeatedly admonishes us to protect the stranger, the orphan and the widow. They were the most vulnerable, and thus likely to be the most exploited.

Today, that most vulnerable person is the child. And the unspeakable exploitation we speak of today is child sexual abuse.

Tragically, figures of trust - family members, rabbis, priests, teachers, guidance counselors - have exploited the innocence of our children to satisfy their sexual passions. This is wrong and it is immoral.

While we believe additional steps are required, we, the Union for Traditional Judaism, join like-minded allies in supporting the bill introduced by Assembly member Margaret M. Markey (D-Maspeth) that would temporarily lift the statute of limitations on lawsuits alleging sexual abuse of children.

The UTJ recently hosted a one-day forum on child sexual abuse. What we discovered was chilling and painful.

While some issues are complex, what is not is the lifetime harm such abuse injects in the child. At our program, we met people in their 30s and 40s who continue to live with the trauma emanating from unwanted acts from their teachers decades ago. Only today, have many of these victims come to terms with what transpired and only today are they prepared to take legal action against their violators.

This bill represents a critical step to helping these people become whole by seeing that those who violated their innocence will be punished.

Through passage of this bill, we are upholding the spirit of the Torah -- for if we are expected to protect the stranger, orphan and widow, how much more must we protect the heretofore silenced child!

Respectfully,

Rabbi Ronald D. Price

Executive Vice President, Union for Traditional Judaism

UTJ is a national religious Jewish organization that promotes open-minded religious observance. It is based in Teaneck, NJ. To learn more about UTJ go to www.utj.org