



Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**JOFA Statement in Response to the RCA Resolution:
Women's Communal Roles in Orthodox Jewish Life**

JOFA commends the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) for addressing the issue of women's communal leadership in a serious and thoughtful manner and for recognizing the sincere desire of Orthodox women for greater participation in serving the Jewish community. We are encouraged that the RCA affirmed its support for the advancement of women in important, professional roles within Orthodox communal life.

At the same time, we are disappointed that the RCA rejected the ordination of women as Orthodox Rabbis or as members of the Orthodox rabbinate. While not unexpected, we are puzzled by this conclusion, as no compelling halakhic analysis has been articulated that prohibits women from serving in these roles. The contributions made by committed, learned women serving the community speak most eloquently to their appropriateness as religious leaders. Over time, we expect that their record will outweigh the concerns that had a significant impact on this decision.

We, together with the RCA, believe that women contribute to the vibrancy of Orthodoxy and that Jewish life is enriched by having women in positions of influence and stature within our community. We look forward to partnering with the RCA to develop a strategy for the expansion of women's leadership roles.

In another resolution passed at this same convention, the RCA noted the reality of different ideologies within Orthodoxy and stated, "We respect their right to differ in the spirit of אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים (these and these are the words of the Living God)." In this spirit and with respect, we continue to support the aspirations of learned, God-fearing women to become authoritative, communal religious leaders.

For more information about JOFA's advocacy efforts, please contact Audrey Axelrod Trachtman, VP of Advocacy, at jofa@jofa.org or 212-679-8500.

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About JOFA (Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance)

The mission of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance is to expand the spiritual, ritual, intellectual and political opportunities for women within the framework of *halakha*. We advocate meaningful participation and equality for women in family life, synagogues, houses of learning and Jewish communal organizations to the full extent possible within *halakha*. Our commitment is rooted in the belief that fulfilling this mission will enrich and uplift individual and communal life for all Jews.