

Congregation Kol Ami Resolution Concerning Endorsement of Political Candidates

Congregation Kol Ami (“Kol Ami”) is committed to nurturing the divine spark within each individual and supporting meaningful Jewish journeys.¹ We believe that exposure to diverse perspectives and respectful dialogue are vital to this mission.

Kol Ami complies fully with IRS regulations governing 501(c)(3) organizations, including the 1954 Johnson Amendment, which prohibits non-profits from “participat[ing] in, or interven[ing] in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.”

While there is discussion that the Johnson Amendment may no longer restrict houses of worship, we affirm our commitment to its principles. As Rabbi Jonah Pesner of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (the Union for Reform Judaism's Social Justice arm) expressed, such a “change in policy weakens the principle of church-state separation that has protected both government and religion, allowing diverse religious communities – including our own – to flourish.”²

We affirm the principle of “Freedom of the Pulpit,” allowing clergy to preach and teach without censorship or undue influence. At the same time, we believe this freedom is best exercised by avoiding explicit political endorsements, thereby preserving the pulpit as a space for inclusive moral and spiritual guidance and protecting clergy from partisan scrutiny.

In view of the foregoing, the Board of Trustees hereby resolves that:

- Congregation Kol Ami and those acting on its behalf—including clergy, staff, and lay leadership (“Congregational Leaders”)—shall not endorse or oppose any political candidate or campaign. While we affirm the sacred principle of “Freedom of the Pulpit,” that freedom does not override this policy.

This resolution does not restrict Congregational Leaders from:

- Engaging in political activities, including endorsing or opposing candidates, in their personal capacities;
- Addressing political, social, and moral issues without endorsing or opposing candidates;
- Hosting qualified candidates for public office in a forum at Kol Ami, so long as opposing qualified candidates are given equal opportunity to participate in the forum, and so long as the forum is for the purpose of public education and the issues do not favor a particular candidate or party;

¹ See Congregation Kol Ami Mission and Vision Statement.

² Statement of the Religious Action Center, July 8, 2025.

- Participating in and/or encouraging non-partisan civic engagement, such as voter registration, voter education, and organizational efforts to assist voters to get to the polls; and
- Lobbying for or against legislation, policies, regulations, and/or state or local referenda, even if on an election ballot.