

# Voting and Judaism

NCJW™

National Council of Jewish Women



## We are commanded to pursue justice.

*Tzedek tzedek tirdof* — or justice, justice shall you pursue. This is the guiding imperative of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). Our tradition teaches that we have an obligation to secure access to health care, welcome immigrants, care for those in poverty, ensure fair wages, and much more. We can impact the way the United States lives out these principles by voting.



## We must contribute to the place where we live.

Based on Jewish experiences of the Diaspora (starting in the 6th century BCE with the Babylonian exile), Jewish leaders have taught that our well-being is tied up with the well-being of the places in which we find ourselves. Through voting, we invest in the welfare of America and its democratic ideals.



## We need to exercise our rights.

Many rabbis have extended the idea of *hakarat hatov* — recognizing and appreciating the opportunities we have — to voting. Throughout history, there have been few times when Jews were able to have a say in the composition of their government. Our history compels us to exercise the rights that we have now and drives our work to strengthen and expand those rights for not only all Jews, but all people in the United States.



## We cannot remain silent.

The Talmud teaches that anyone who sees harm and does not speak out is held responsible. Our vote is our voice, and we must also protest attacks on the rights of other voters. We are obligated to speak up and take action to ensure that every eligible person can cast a vote and have that vote counted.



## We believe equality is a core Jewish value.

Judaism teaches we are all created in the divine image, *b'tzelem Elohim*. This means we are all equal, yet the United States is rife with injustice that particularly impacts people of color. Voter suppression tactics, such as voter purges and gerrymandering, hurt our democracy; we are obligated to fight for equal access to the ballot for all.



## It's on us.

A midrash teaches, "If a person sits in their home and says to themselves, 'What have the affairs of society to do with me?... Why should I trouble myself with the people's voices of protest? Let my soul dwell in peace!' — If one does this, they overthrow the world." Staying on the sidelines is in itself an act of destruction. We each must do our part to repair the world.