

26 July 2016

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

Dear Ms Truss,

Many congratulations on your appointment as Justice Secretary. We look forward to working with you in this role.

As Rabbis, we are writing to you today to say that human rights are intimately connected to both Jewish values and to Jewish experience. It was the policy of the government under David Cameron's premiership to repeal the Human Rights Act. We would like to restate our opposition to any move which seeks to reduce human rights protections or limit to whom they apply.

The European Convention on Human Rights, on which the Human Rights Act is based, was Europe's response to the horror of the Holocaust. As leaders and members within the Jewish community, we would oppose any attempt to water down a document that gives practical expression to the idea that all people deserve to be treated with dignity and receive equal access to justice. The Human Rights Act protects victims of crime, the wrongly accused, the disabled, the mistreated, and the elderly. It has allowed countless people to pursue justice here in the UK and is an instrument the values of which should be respected, not diminished.

Reducing human rights protection here would also serve to undermine human rights progress around the world and have worrying ramifications for vulnerable Jewish communities across Europe.

This is an issue that strikes at the heart of both our specifically Jewish and our universal sensibilities. We therefore ask that you reconsider the proposal to repeal the Human Rights Act.

Yours sincerely,

Rabbi James Baaden \* Rabbi Miriam Berger \* Rabbi Francis Ronald Berry \* Rabbi Dr Barbara Borts \* Rabbi Janet Burden \* Rabbi Howard Cooper \* Rabbi Janet Darley \* Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton \* Rabbi Colin Eimer \* Rabbi Paul Freedman \* Rabbi Ariel J Friedlander \* Rabbi Amanda Golby \* Rabbi Aaron Goldstein \* Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz \* Rabbi Harry Jacobi \* Rabbi Dr. Margaret Jacobi \* Rabbi Richard Jacobi \* Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris \* Rabbi Yuval Keren \* Rabbi Sandra Kviat \* Rabbi Judith Levitt \* Rabbi Monique Mayer \* Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh \* Rabbi Lea Mühlstein \* Rabbi Rene Pfterzel \* Rabbi Rebecca Qassim Birk \* Rabbi Danny Rich \* Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild \* Rabbi Sybil Sheridan \* Rabbi Irit Shillor \* Cantor Gershon Silins \* Rabbi Daniel Smith \* Rabbi Benji Stanley \* Rabbi Larry Tabick \* Rabbi Daniela Thau \* Rabbi Elli Tikvah-Sarah \* Rabbi Charles Wallach \* Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg \* Rabbi Alexandra Wright \* Rabbi Roderick Young \* Rabbi Debbie Young-Summers