

ORAYNU CONGREGATION OPPOSES GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF ALL FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE
September 21, 2007

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism believes that the democratic state is a public entity for all its citizens and residents and that religion is a private matter. When church and state, government and religion, are separated, democracy is strengthened. In keeping with this precept, Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism opposes government funding of all faith-based schools. Each faith has its own agenda, its own philosophy, its own principles, its own guidelines for moral behaviour. By the nature of the differences among faiths, these principles are often at odds with one another. It is not the business of government to provide assistance to private ideologies particularly if some of those ideologies are in conflict with the national ethos. Justice and fairness are subject to assault when society as a whole is asked to subsidize these conflicting principles among the various faiths.

Unfairness is promulgated by placing faith-based schools in a position of privilege over other private schools which are not faith-based. The adoption of this unfair approach to education jeopardizes the public school system, supports principles that divide society rather than unite it, and weakens our democratic foundations. Fairness is, indeed, a hallmark of democracy. It would be extremely unfair to ask any of us to provide support, through tax dollars, for private educational institutions whose philosophies do not embrace the totality of society.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds that a democratic country needs a strong and single publicly funded secular educational system. Private schools, whether faith-based or not, should look to their own communities or constituencies for support, not to all of society.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism agrees with those who say that the present funding mechanism in Ontario is unfair and indefensible because only one faith-based school system currently receives public funds. The remedy is not to exacerbate the problem but to legislate a policy in which no faith-based school receives public support. Let faith-based schools continue to offer private education that meets the provincial standards but let the parents and communities of those faiths support that education and let the public purse be available only to a single publicly financed educational system that is intended for all of us irrespective of faith or ethno-cultural background.

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