

Media Contact:
Adria Greenberg
Sommerfield Communications, Inc.
212-255-8386
adria@sommerfield.com

**REFORM RABBIS, WORLD'S LARGEST GROUP OF JEWISH CLERGY,
URGE QUICK LEGISLATIVE ACTION TO PROVIDE FEDERAL FUNDING
FOR FAMILY PLANNING AND MEDICALLY ACCURATE SEX EDUCATION**

While Leaders of Reform Rabbinate Applaud President Obama for Eliminating "Global Gag Rule" so Family Planning Services Will be Available Around the World, They Express Concern that He Suggests Removing Family Planning and Sex Education from Stimulus Package

NEW YORK CITY - (February 4, 2009) – The [Central Conference of American Rabbis](#) (CCAR), which represents nearly 2,000 Reform rabbis, the world's largest group of Jewish clergy, issued a statement calling for quick Congressional action for funding family planning and comprehensive sex education -- whether through a stimulus package or another vehicle.

The rabbis expressed concern that President Obama suggested removing this kind of funding from the stimulus package before the U.S. House of Representatives. Meanwhile, they applauded the President for immediately lifting the "global gag rule," a move that will allow family planning and sex education services to be available where needed around the world.

Following is the full text of the statement:

Central Conference of American Rabbis

**Reform Rabbinic Leadership Calls for Quick Action on Family Planning
and Comprehensive Sex Education**

Like President Barack Obama, the Central Conference of American Rabbis has long held a strong commitment to women's reproductive health and freedom, and to responsible sexuality education.

Jewish tradition teaches us that health care for all is a communal responsibility.

Jewish tradition insists on truth, and so-called "abstinence-only sex-education" violates the truth when it describes contraception only in terms of failure rates.

Jewish law places saving life above almost every other commandment: the availability of contraceptive care and comprehensive sexuality education save lives.

We are grateful that, during his first week in office, President Obama demonstrated the priority he places on these issues by revoking the “global gag rule,” thereby making family planning services available where they are most needed around the world.

In the last week, some family planning advocates were disappointed, when President Obama asked that family planning funding be removed from the economic stimulus bill before the U.S. Representatives.

Whether enhanced funding for family planning and comprehensive, medically accurate sex education is provided through a stimulus package or some other vehicle, we call upon President Obama, his administration, and the leadership of both Houses of Congress to assure that action is taken on these critical issues in the opening weeks of this new Administration and Congress.

Peter S. Knobel
President

Steven A. Fox
Executive Vice-President

To arrange a conversation with Rabbi Knobel or Rabbi Fox, please contact Adria Greenberg at Sommerfield Communications, Inc. at 212-255-8386 or adria@sommerfield.com

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, founded in 1889, is the oldest and largest rabbinic organization in North America. As the professional organization for Reform Rabbis of North America, the CCAR projects a powerful voice in the religious life of the American and international Jewish communities. Since its establishment, the CCAR has a rich history of giving professional and personal support to Reform rabbis, providing them opportunities for study, professional development and spiritual growth beginning while they are still in seminary, through mid-careers, and into retirement. The CCAR is uniquely positioned to meet the ongoing needs of its 1,850 member rabbis (virtually the entire Reform rabbinate) and the entire Reform Jewish community.