

## **OU and RCA applaud guilty verdict in child molestation case**

by OU Staff

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### **OU Joins the RCA in Applauding Guilty Verdict of Orthodox Jew for Child Molestation**

The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), the world's largest organization of Orthodox rabbis is encouraged by the process that led to the conviction of Nechemyah Weberman, an Orthodox Jew who acted as an unlicensed counselor and was today found guilty for the sexual molestation of an adolescent girl. For many years the RCA has condemned the efforts of many parts of the Jewish community to cover up or ignore allegations of abuse, viewing these efforts as against Jewish law, illegal, and irresponsible to the welfare of victims and the greater community. The RCA strongly advocates, as a matter of Jewish law, the reporting of reasonable suspicions of child abuse to the civil authorities and full cooperation with the criminal justice system. The RCA decries any invocation of Jewish law or communal interests as tools in silencing victims or witnesses from reporting abuse or from receiving therapeutic and communal support and strongly condemn those members of the Jewish community who used such tactics in this case.

In light of the issues raised in this trial the RCA commits itself to increasing the training of its members who serve in all areas of the rabbinate, including pulpits, education, chaplaincy, and communal service, to know how to recognize, prevent, and respond appropriately to issues of child abuse. In addition, the RCA will help its members develop policies regarding prevention and response to issues of child abuse in their individual congregations and schools, as well as in their larger communities, and, where nonexistent, to support the creation of response teams that include mental health practitioners, law-enforcement personnel, and specially trained rabbis to respond to allegations of abuse and molestation.

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin, president of the RCA, stated, "Weberman's conviction is validation of our commitment to work with law enforcement to protect the innocent victims of our community and to hold their perpetrators accountable." Rabbi Mark Dratch, Executive Vice President of the RCA and founder of JSafe: The Jewish Institute Supporting an Abuse Free Environment, added, "We, like other religious communities, have come a long way in recent years in recognizing and addressing issues of child abuse in our communities. We increasingly understand that our religious texts, traditions, and values must serve as resources of strength and support for members of our faith communities, not as roadblocks to their safety and security."

We, the leadership of the Orthodox Union, join the Rabbinical Council of America in applauding this verdict. We are dedicated to combating the scourge of abuse in our community in every possible way, and are guided by the policies referred to in the above statement.

- Dr. Simcha Katz, *President*

- Rabbi Steven Weil, *Executive Vice President*

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Original piece is <http://www.ou.org/life/community/rca-on-guilty-verdict-of-orthodox-jew-for-child-molestation-and-addendum-from-rabbi-weinreb/#.UMqfR2fhfb0>

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