



JEWISH COALITION *for*  
IMMIGRANT JUSTICE NW

## Newsletter

May 19, 2023 • 28 Iyar 5783

# A DROP OF HONEY

## Shavuot: Torah Without Borders

By Rabbi Seth Goldstein, Temple Beth Hatfiloh in Olympia

Shavuot, which we observe this month, is the festival of Torah, a remembrance of the story of Sinai when God revealed the Torah to Moses and the Israelites, thus providing this once-enslaved people a foundation and framework for a new community. As the inheritors of that foundation, we celebrate the moment of revelation as the moment we affirmed, and continue to affirm, our commitment to our sacred texts and traditions, and each other.

The location of Mount Sinai was a curiosity to our ancient sages, the rabbis of the Talmud. Why was the Torah given in the middle of the wilderness as part of the journey? Why was it not given in the Promised Land, for example? In examining the first verse of the Book of Numbers, the rabbis teach:

"And God spoke to Moses in the Sinai Wilderness" (Numbers 1:1). Why the Sinai Wilderness? From here the sages taught that the Torah was given through three things: fire, water, and wilderness.... And why was the Torah given through these three things? Just as fire, water, and wilderness are free to all the inhabitants of the world, so too are the words of Torah free to them, as it says in Isaiah 55:1, "Oh, all who are thirsty, come for water... even if you have no money." (Bamidbar Rabbah 1:7)

The Torah was given in the wilderness because it was "free"—in the open, where all can access it, where it is available to all who desire it. In other words: the Torah was given in a place without borders.

The verse from the prophet Isaiah that the rabbis use to prove this point is also poignant. On the one hand, the rabbis are reading “water” as a metaphor for Torah—both sustain life and should therefore be freely given. On the other hand, the text speaks to providing for everyone’s most basic physical needs.

In describing revelation, therefore, the rabbis teach that we are to both to care for one another by providing life’s necessities, and to lower or eliminate the barriers that create separation.

And, we are reminded with this midrash, that to welcome and advocate for those who seek to flee hardship and find a better life in a new land, and fight for immigrant justice in general, is not only remembering our ancient and modern stories, but living into the essence of Torah itself.

## EVENTS

### Celebrate the Jewish Coalition becoming a Nonprofit!

**WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED**  
Celebrate JCIJ's New Non-Profit  
Status and Accomplishments So Far

SUNDAY, JUNE 4TH 3-5PM  
SEWARD PARK SHELTER 4  
5900 SEWARD PARK AVE S  
Map: [bit.ly/jcijparkmap](http://bit.ly/jcijparkmap)

**SNACKS AND CAKE  
PROGRAM AT 3:30PM**

- Music by Brivele, Seattle-based anti-facist klezmer folk-punk trio
- Welcome by Rabbi Jay LeVine of Kavana Cooperative
- A few songs and speeches of celebration by dazed yet spirited volunteers

Children are welcome! But there is no specific children's program.

RSVP at:  
[bit.ly/jcijcelebrate](http://bit.ly/jcijcelebrate)

**RSVP Here**

Join with the Jewish Coalition to celebrate our new nonprofit 501(c)(3) status! Join us on June 4 at 3-5pm at [Seward Park Shelter 4](#). The short program will begin at 3:30 with music from Brivele, the anti-fascist klezmer folk-punk trio, a welcome from Rabbi Jay LeVine, cake, snacks, and lots of appreciation for all of you.

Accessibility: Please note there are 12 steps down from parking to this shelter.

## Undocu Summit 2023



[UNDOCU SUMMIT 2023](#), produced by Leadership Without Borders at University of Washington Seattle will be in-person on June 15 with the theme Empowerment in our Resiliency. The summit will explore essential components of empowerment that include the tools, information, resources, and the freedom within the undocumented community to continue to achieve common goals and live our purpose. [Register here.](#)

## SUPPORT

### Bond Parents out of Detention in Honor of Mother's Day, Father's Day, and in Support of All Families

The [Fair Fight Bond Fund](#) gives immigrants in Washington a fighting chance. The bonds posted allow detained immigrants to return to their lives and families while they build a case to gain immigration status. Please donate to honor mothers, fathers, and children!

**[Support the Bond Fund](#)**

The [National Bail Out Collective](#) coordinates the Mama's Day Bail Outs, which bail out Black Mamas and caregivers so they can spend Mother's Day with their families where they belong!

## TAKE ACTION

# Take Action: Tell Congress to Protect Families and Reject Increased Funding for Immigration Detention

The Biden administration is reportedly considering [reinstating family detention](#) amid a backdrop of expected increases in people arriving at the U.S. southern border. Now is the time to urge policymakers to reflect our values and ensure noncitizens are treated humanely by reducing the use of immigration detention and protecting families against the innumerable harms of family detention.

**Take Action**

## VOLUNTEER

### New JCIJ Accompaniment Volunteer Opportunity

JCIJ invites you to become an accompaniment volunteer for [Colectiva Legal del Pueblo](#). Colectiva Legal, located in Burien, offers pro bono and low bono legal services to immigrants, education to empower the community, and advocacy around immigrant justice issues. We are organizing teams of volunteers to support Colectiva Legal with clerical tasks and their clothing bank, and to provide accompaniment for their clients.

We've identified four volunteer opportunities for JCIJ participants to help support the work of Colectiva Legal:

- 1) Support the Clothing Bank which serves Colectiva Legal's clients. JCIJ volunteers will have one or two volunteer shifts a month usually on Thursdays.
- 2) Assist with clerical tasks in the Legal Department. JCIJ volunteer shifts can be up to once a week on Thursdays.
- 3) Accompany clients to various appointments as requested by Colectiva Legal legal staff. Orientation will be provided as needed; Spanish language skill may be required and will be determined on a case by case basis.
- 4) Volunteer at a Colectiva Legal ProSe Asylum Clinic helping clients fill out their applications for asylum. This requires proficiency in Spanish as well as specific training by Colectiva Legal. The next clinics will be August 19 and December 2 of 2023.

**Volunteer**

By supporting the work of Colectiva Legal with these tasks, JCIJ volunteers will help Colectiva Legal focus squarely on building the best possible case for its clients.

**Please complete this [Volunteer Interest Form](#), and we will contact you about the next steps for connecting with Colectiva Legal.**

# Deportation Flights have Resumed. Volunteers Needed to Monitor ICE Activity!

Now that a [Federal Judge has allowed ICE flights to resume](#) from King County Airport (Boeing Field), it is very important to prevent NWDC from becoming a “black site” where ICE can make people appear and disappear without anyone knowing. These flights ensnare immigrants before they can make their case to attain legal status in the US, separate families, and return immigrants to the dangers they fled. The flights began last week.

Our immigrant justice partner, [La Resistencia](#), is working with [Tsuru for Solidarity](#) and Angelina Godoy at the [UW Center for Human Rights](#) to identify how often ICE is scheduling detention (incoming) and deportation (outgoing) flights at King County Airport (KCA). ICE has been unwilling to share any information, requiring the organizations to file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

The goal is to witness every flight and get a count of how many people get off the plane (headed for NWDC) and how many people are put on the plane (headed for deportation). In the past, ICE had a schedule of one flight a week on Tuesday morning.

**Volunteers are needed to monitor this ICE activity! If you are interested in learning more about being part of a monitoring team at either King County Airport or the Northwest Detention Center, please email us at [goforth@iciinw.org](mailto:goforth@iciinw.org).**

## LEGISLATIVE WINS

**Thank you for your powerful advocacy this Legislative Session!** You sent letters to your state legislators, joined Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Days at the state capitol, came together for an educational program about JCIJ's legislative priorities, and helped make these wins possible. [Here are the full results](#).

### Outcomes of JCIJ's Top 3 priorities:

#### Unemployment Benefits for Undocumented Workers SB5109 / HB1095

**Did not pass, but got the farthest it has so far and will be a priority for next year.**

Expanding access to unemployment benefits to all workers, regardless of immigration status.

#### Health Equity for Immigrants

**Funded! Did not pass as a bill but shifted into a budget proviso funded at \$53 million**

- \$49.5 million for a new Medicaid-like program for undocumented immigrants under 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) starting July 2024.

- \$110M to continue funding for HealthPlanFinder premium assistance for all Washingtonians under 250% FPL, including \$10M for undocumented immigrants thanks to the 1332 waiver starting January 2024.
- \$3.7M in new funds to support outreach, customer assistance, and administration for the new programs - including a study of how to improve Cascade Care affordability through further 1332 waivers.

Health Equity reflects a Washington state where all can access the health care we need, regardless of immigration status. Next year, we will continue to fight for a bill that would improve access to affordable health care and coverage for all Washington residents, prioritizing equal access for individuals who are uninsured and underinsured due to immigration status restrictions.

## Immigrant Legal and Naturalization Assistance

**Funded!**

**\$4 million for Naturalization assistance doubled from \$2-\$4M biennially.**

**\$8 million for Legal Support and Community Safety program**

To gear up for the next Legislative Session, we will continue to build relationships with coalition partners, build support of action takers from across the state, and plan powerful campaigns to pass Unemployment Insurance and Health Equity bills in 2024. Interested in joining? Email [goforth@jcijnw.org](mailto:goforth@jcijnw.org).

# COMMITTEES

## Accompaniment Committee

We have been focusing our efforts this month on organizing and preparing to launch our new JCIJ accompaniment volunteer outreach project to recruit volunteers to support the work of our immigrant justice partner organization, Colectiva Legal del Pueblo.

We invite you to complete and submit a [volunteer interest form](#) and we will be in touch. We also support accompaniment opportunities, such as accompanying immigrants to court, when we receive requests from our other immigrant justice partners.

Please join us! Let us know [here](#) of your interest.

## Advocacy Committee

With Legislative Session over, we'll be shifting to focus on federal immigration - the end of Title 42 and asylum seekers at the southern border, limiting funding for ICE and Detention beds, and ending 287(g) contracts between law enforcement and ICE.

JCIJ's Advocacy Committee meets virtually the second Sunday of each month. [Join](#) our next monthly meeting on June 11 from 4-5:30PM.

# Community Engagement

We are developing inviting ways for individuals to take action in support and advocacy for immigrants, and we will continue to plan collection drives for 2023-24. If you are interested in joining this important work, please sign up [here](#).

## Book Club

Our next book: *My Broken Language* by Quiara Alegría Hudes

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Quiara Alegría Hudes tells her lyrical story of coming of age against the backdrop of an ailing Philadelphia barrio, with her sprawling idiosyncratic, love-and-trouble-filled Puerto Rican family as a collective muse.

The Immigrant Justice Book Club meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm. [Join our next meeting](#): June 6 at 7PM.

# SYNAGOGUE SPOTLIGHT

## Welcoming the Stranger at Havurah Shalom, a vibrant, diverse, participatory Jewish Reconstructionist community in Portland

By Miriam Reshotko and Lee Gordon

When we became empty nesters in 2021, sending our youngest child off to college, we weren't concerned about being lonely. Fast forward to 2022 and the war in Ukraine. We longed to help people escape an unjustified war. Perhaps because our families both fled eastern Europe to escape violence and oppression, we felt an especially strong connection. Upon hearing that the US had a fast-track program for citizens to sponsor Ukrainian refugees, we signed up on websites that allowed people in need of sponsors to contact us.

The requests were numerous, constant, and many were heart rending. We screened the inquiries and contacted a young couple we hoped to sponsor. We set up a zoom call to "meet" them. We were thrilled when the application was approved and shortly after, they received travel approval.

We contacted friends at Havurah Shalom and asked them to join our "welcome circle." Eventually this group of people (about 12-15 in all) became the "Ukrainian subgroup" of the Havurah Sanctuary committee, joining other subgroups supporting Guatemalan and Afghan families.

The requests for help continued to pour in. Many of the requesters only wanted sponsorship so that they could legally enter the US. In all, we have sponsored six Ukrainian couples. To date, members of our group have sponsored 28 people.

We are currently housing a lovely young couple who have quickly become part of our extended family. They are studying English, have found jobs, have purchased a car and are diligently striving to become part of the local community. Some others have decided to move on to other parts of the country where they have friends. A few are housed locally with their sponsors or in rentals with subsidies from the Jewish Federation of Portland.

We highly recommend that people check out the opportunities to sponsor!

Try [www.icanhelp.host](http://www.icanhelp.host) and <https://www.uscis.gov/ukraine>. Feel free to contact Lee Gordon: [Lee@handinhandk12.org](mailto:Lee@handinhandk12.org) with questions about getting started.

## NEWS

### The End of Title 42



The American Immigration Council held an excellent webinar on May 10, 2023 about the end of Title 42 and steps toward a better humanitarian protection system. You can now [watch a recording](#) of the webinar.

Here is a comprehensive plan recommended by the American Immigration Council: [Beyond a Border Solution: How to Build a Humanitarian Protection System That Will Not Break.](#)

Immigrant Justice Partner [Never Again Action](#) Explains Biden's Transit Ban, the End of Title 42, and Title 8 Expansion

**NEVER ★ AGAIN**  
**ACTION**



The Biden administration is imposing **stiffer consequences** for people who do not follow lawful pathways to seek asylum. At the same time, they are modifying what counts as a “lawful pathway.” Let’s be absolutely clear: **A person must be physically present in the United States in order to request asylum.**

Biden’s rule change would make individuals who cross into the U.S. without permission or who arrive at the border without an appointment ineligible for asylum. This is counter to U.S. and international policy and is one aspect of Title 8 that may be challenged and eventually struck down in court (the ACLU has already been outspoken about these changes and are expected to sue). People have a right to seek asylum regardless of how they arrive in the U.S.

[Read more here.](#)

## SONGS IN THE KEY OF JCIJ

Curated by Dina Burstein

[Harry Belafonte - Mama Look A Boo Boo](#) I would like to honor the remarkable Harry Belafonte, who died last month. From Democracy Now’s remembrance: “The son of Jamaican immigrants, Belafonte rose to stardom in the 1950s and became the first artist to sell a million records with his album Calypso. He was also the first African American actor to win an Emmy. Along with his growing fame, Belafonte became deeply involved in the civil rights movement. One of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s closest confidants, he helped to organize the March on Washington in 1963 and frequently raised money to bail activists out of jail and fund their activities throughout the South. Belafonte was also a longtime critic of U.S. foreign policy, calling for an end to the embargo against Cuba, supporting the anti-apartheid movement and opposing policies of war and global oppression.”

[La Ketuba De La Ley by Sarah Aroeste](#)

Many Sephardic communities precede this reading of the Book of Ruth on Shavuot by singing the famous azharot, a poetical enumeration of the 613 commandments (mitzvot). Ladino-speaking Jews also included translations of this liturgy and added a unique Ladino song known as “La Ketubah de la Ley,” the marriage contract of the law, or Torah. Learn more about [Scenes of Shavuot from Salonica to Seattle.](#)

[Video of Zog Nit Keynmo!](#) To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising last month, 6 Kadima members gathered to sing the partisan anthem, recapitulating their performance at Kadima’s first public event in 1978, which seems like a long, long time ago.

[Where You Go](#) Shavuot, which begins May 27, draws from [the story of Ruth and Naomi](#) (as it appears in Sefaria). Shoshana Jedwab’s beautiful song connects Ruth’s ancient promise of love and connection to Naomi to love of and connection to chosen family, refugees, mother earth, children, ancestors.

Be in touch with the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW  
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