JCRC Releases *Survey of Bay Area Jewish Identity*

San Francisco, CA – The Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (JCRC Bay Area) today announced the first-ever *Survey of Bay Area Jewish Identity*. Conducted by EMC Research, a well-respected national public opinion firm with Bay Area roots, the survey included 828 total completed interviews with Bay Area residents who identify as Jewish.

“As antisemitism rises, stereotypes about Jews continue to persist and people all too often make the erroneous assumption that Jews are nothing more than a white and privileged religious minority. We believe that widespread misconceptions about Jewish identity are major contributing factors to antisemitism,” said Tyler Gregory, CEO, JCRC Bay Area. “Our goal with this survey was to gain a deeper understanding of Bay Area Jews’ views on their identity and their experiences as Jews in the public square—issues not covered in other surveys. We plan to use the data to reframe public understanding of Jewish identity in the Bay Area, transforming JCRC’s work moving forward by centering the diversity and complexity of the Bay Area Jewish community.”

Being Jewish was important to the vast majority of respondents (86 percent), even among many of those who say they are not active communally or who don’t identify religiously as Jewish. In fact, over half of the respondents (52 percent) didn’t consider religion a significant part of their identity. Instead, family heritage, the Holocaust, and Jewish values or ethics were most significant. This contradicts common public framing of Jews as primarily a faith-based group.

While a majority of Bay Area Jews taking the survey (83 percent) said they publicly identify as Jewish and are comfortable doing so (89 percent), setting and environment were factors; social media and public places were described as the least comfortable.

The survey also found that over the past three years, 32 percent of respondents directly experienced or personally witnessed antisemitism. The most commonly reported settings were social media, schools/workplaces, and public spaces. An even higher number (40 percent) experienced Israel-related hatred or discrimination—affirming the flood of stories JCRC has heard in recent years of Jews facing litmus tests and collective punishment for events overseas.
Finally, the survey revealed overwhelming support for Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state (89 percent). However, that support was shown to coexist with deep concern about Israel’s policies toward the Palestinians; only 33 percent are generally comfortable with those policies.

“Such results are consistent with JCRC’s support for Zionism, the right to a Jewish homeland, and also demonstrate the critical importance of separating Jews’ support for Israel’s right to exist from their views about its policies. The survey also validated JCRC’s policy views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Participants overwhelmingly—62 percent—picked a two-state solution as the best resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A mere one-in-four expressed support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), a movement which JCRC believes to be counterproductive to coexistence work,” said Gregory.


JCRC Bay Area is the largest collective voice of Bay Area Jews. By building bridges and working in coalition with diverse ethnic, faith, political, and civic communities, JCRC is pursuing justice based on Jewish values and strengthening the pillars that our democratic society needs to thrive.

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