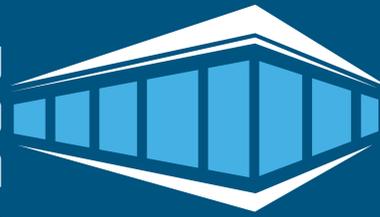


# על משמר הכנסת



מעקב אזרחי  
דת ומדינה, פלורליזם ושוויון

התנועה המסורתית  
יהדות ישראלית

## The Knesset As A Sounding Board

The second session of the 20th Knesset commenced on May 7, 2017 and concluded on July 30, 2017. During the summer session, which just ended, the Knesset served as a sounding board echoing the challenges of religion and state that reached its gates from outside sources: the public, the State Comptroller, the government and even from the Diaspora. The Knesset was less proactive but was certainly responsive. The hunger strike by Tzvia Gorodetsky, who is being refused a writ of divorce, the State Comptroller's report which revealed serious flaws in the kashrut system, the freezing of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement, the promotion of the government's conversion bill memorandum, the blacklist of 160 rabbis from the Diaspora – all these knocked on the Knesset gates, demanding to be let in.

In fact, this is one of the important functions of the Israeli parliament. When operating at its best, the Knesset may be compared to a crowded town square which is vibrant with the discourse occupying voters. It appears that MKs have made room for issues on the public agenda, and we regard this as a significant and desirable development. It is important to note that the summer session lasts for only half the time (approximately) as the winter session, however it is apparent that the Knesset members worked diligently in the committee arena and held an impressive number of committee meetings on matters of religion and state (with a difference of only 9% fewer meetings compared to the number of meetings in the winter session). The Knesset responded to current events in committee debates and the plenum and in motions for order. In legislation – less so. Perhaps the Western Wall compromise agreement is already beginning to emerge with some prominence in the bills of opposition members. It is well known that promoting legislation is more complex than holding a plenary session or committee discussion. Legislative stages require procedures that are not immediate. Therefore, we find that the number of bills that were proposed or discussed during the summer session is logically lower by 45% in comparison with the corresponding number in the winter session. Perhaps we will see the fruits of the public and political discourse in the field of religion and state further maturing as legislative proceedings in the upcoming Knesset session, which commences on October 22, 2017.

## Freezing of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement and Presentation of the Conversion Bill Memorandum

The Knesset's summer session was held at a regular and even relatively moderate pace for its entire length up until the last week of June 2017. Members of the Knesset occupied themselves somewhat with the hunger strike of Tzvia Gorodetsky, who has been refused a divorce for over 17 years. The Sabbath issue made its appearance briefly but then fell off the agenda. Following the entanglement created around the issue of Lag BaOmer and the vacation days in the education system, the subject appeared on the Knesset's agenda. Members of the legislative committee examined the question regarding the appointment of a woman to the position of director general of the Rabbinical courts.

And then, suddenly, two surprises occurred on Sunday, June 25, 2017, on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5777, both in the realm of religion and state. That day, the proposal to freeze the Western Wall Compromise Agreement was suddenly introduced in a meeting of the Cabinet. The State's need to respond quickly to various petitions in the Supreme Court of Justice caused the Prime Minister

and some of his ministers to hasten and establish facts by means of legislation and government decisions. The public's reaction was stormy. Leaders from Israel and the Diaspora expressed themselves in harsh remarks opposing these two decisions. Many Knesset members spoke on the subject, submitted motions for the agenda, queries, bills and participated in committee discussions and caucuses. A review of the data presented here in the document below serves to reflect the way the Knesset responded to these two unfortunate decisions. For further discussion of key issues surrounding the Western Wall Compromise Agreement and the Conversion Bill, we have attached to the summary report a condensed document that relates to questions about the Western Wall layout, and an additional document with questions relating to the Conversion Bill.

These two topics will continue to occupy the Israeli public and Diaspora Jewry in the coming months and there is no doubt that we will also hear about them in the winter session that commences after the holidays.

## Religious Indoctrination (הדתה)

Following complaints by students and parents in various places in Israel, and with the help of non-profit organizations, especially The Secular Forum and Molad, a tense public debate on the subject of Jewish studies and Jewish heritage in public schools arose. In one of the stormy discussions that took place in the Knesset, MK Stav Shaffir (Zionist Camp) remarked: "Our discussion is in favor. In favor of Jewish education. Against political brainwashing. The attempt to insinuate that there is a group that is against Judaism and another group that is in favor of Judaism constitutes incitement. And the whole thing is funded by the tax money of the citizens

of Israel. This is not forcing people to become religious, this is political propaganda that utilizes religion... The lack of supervision sounds very surprising to me. There is supervision over what they wish to supervise, but apparently supervision in the schools of Jewish political associations that belong to the Jewish Home faction has eluded the Ministry of Education. There are thousands of complaints from parents, the Ministry of Education - go to your minister's Facebook page. The committee calls upon you to remove external associations from the schools and kindergartens, and allow teachers to teach their professional content."

## State Comptroller's Report - Kashrut and more

At the beginning of the Knesset's summer session, on May 16, 2017, the State Comptroller, Justice Yosef Shapira, published the State Comptroller's report, which severely criticized the state's conduct on a number of issues related to the relationship between religion and state in the State of Israel. The first issue is the exclusion of women in public places. According to the Comptroller, government

ministries must implement proactive inspections, exercise their powers, supervise and enforce actions to eradicate the phenomenon. The Ministry of Justice is required to instruct government ministries in this area, to increase the supervision over them to ensure that the necessary measures are taken, and to demand regular reports on their activities.

The second issue is discrimination in ultra-Orthodox educational institutions, an issue that appeared on the public's agenda with the commencement of the 2016-2017 school year. During the winter session, the Knesset rejected the bill of MK Meir Cohen (Yesh Atid), which seeks to prevent discrimination within educational institutions based on ethnic or religious origin. The State Comptroller writes in his report: "The Ministry of Education must formulate a comprehensive and effective response to the comprehensive treatment of discrimination in the education system, which will encompass all educational institutions and all forms of discrimination."

The third issue is civilian burial services. In this regard, the State Comptroller determined that the Minister of Religious Services should act to realize the authority that was imposed upon him by legislation to establish civilian cemeteries, to ensure an individual's basic right to be buried in a civilian burial. It was further determined that the Ministry of Religious Services, as the legal body responsible for the implementation of civil burial, must work with lawmakers to implement the changes that are necessary so that the Ministry can fulfill its functions. "In

view of the findings of this report, the government should reconsider whether the Ministry of Religious Services is indeed the appropriate body to take responsibility for the implementation of the Civil Burial Law," the report said.

The fourth issue, which drew most of the reactions from the political system to the State Comptroller's report, is the conduct of the kashrut system under the Ministry of Religious Services. The comptroller's report indicates a very bleak picture regarding the kashrut system, and states that: "Although approximately a decade has elapsed since the previous audit, the religious councils have not corrected most of the flaws raised in it and have not improved the functioning of the state kashrut system." The Comptroller writes that the findings of the audit indicate a serious failure on the part of the religious councils that were examined to enforce the kashrut guidelines. "This is grave behavior on the part of religious councils, who are turning a blind eye, thereby damaging the level of kashrut, ruining the public's trust in the kashrut system that the state is supposed to guarantee and even misleading the businesses that pay for supervision hours that are not always performed in practice."

## Religions in Israel

It is noteworthy that throughout the summer session, Arab Knesset members from a variety of factions were engaged in promoting religious services for the non-Jewish public in Israel. Of course, the complex structure of relations between religion and state concerns all religions in Israel. Some of the challenges facing all the religions are similar and some are unique to each religion. We welcome the MKs' work in this important civil struggle. It is good to see that there is activity and development amongst a variety of religions in Israel. MKs proposed, among other things: To alleviate the work load of workers during fast days (Bill by MK Zouheir Bahloul [Zionist Camp]); to deal with the complex issue of polygamy in the Bedouin sector (Bill by MK Aida Toma-Sliman [Joint List]); to establish an Authority for the Development of the Muslim Holy Places (MK Masud Ganaim [Joint List]). They also held several discussions about topics related to the Shari'a and Druze Religious Courts.

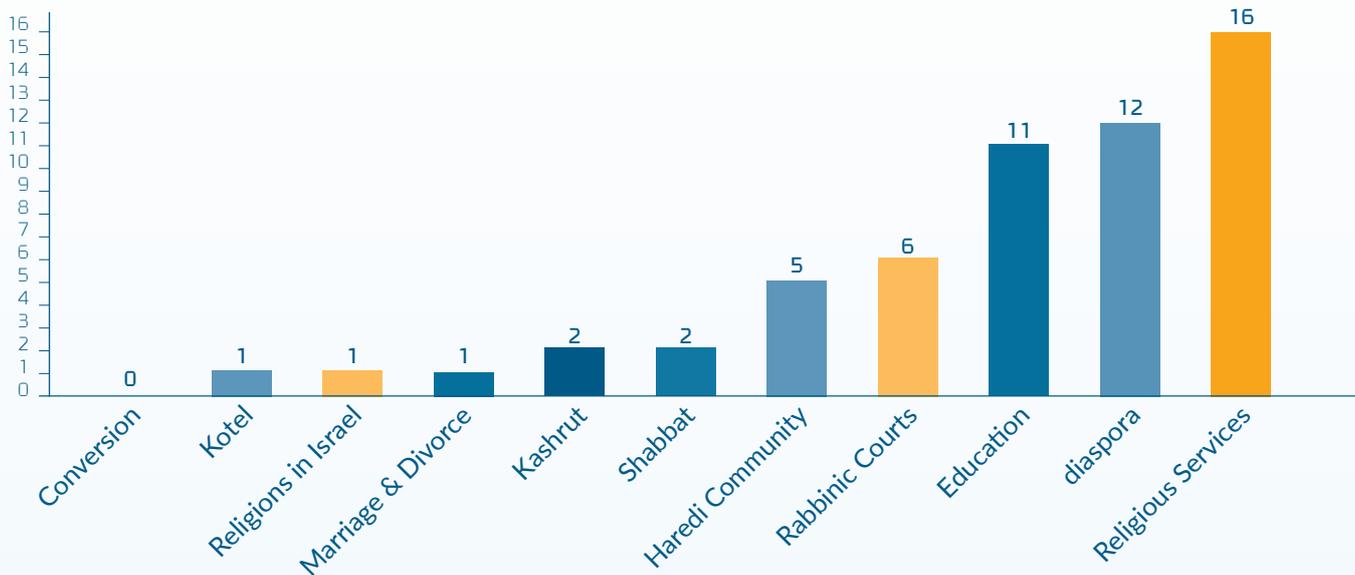
In addition to the legislative procedures at the end of April 2017 relating to the work of the qadis, we were informed that in a historic decision, the first woman qadi, Advocate Hana Khatib, was appointed as a judge in the Muslim religious court. Advocate Hana Khatib holds a master's degree in law specializing in marital law and

Shari'a law, and has received certification as a mediator. It may be noted that this took place after many years during which the ultra-Orthodox parties tried to prevent this move, in order to prevent a precedent that would effect the appointment of women judges in the Israel's Jewish religious courts. In response to the appointment, MK Rachel Azaria (Kulanu) remarked: "This is history! I wonder when history will also arrive at the [Jewish] religious courts? Today, women are not even allowed to serve as legal assistants, although this is not a halakhic issue, and of course women are not allowed to serve as judges. Today, Hana Khatib, was appointed as the first qadi in the Shari'a courts in Israel ... well done! May it happen soon with us. "

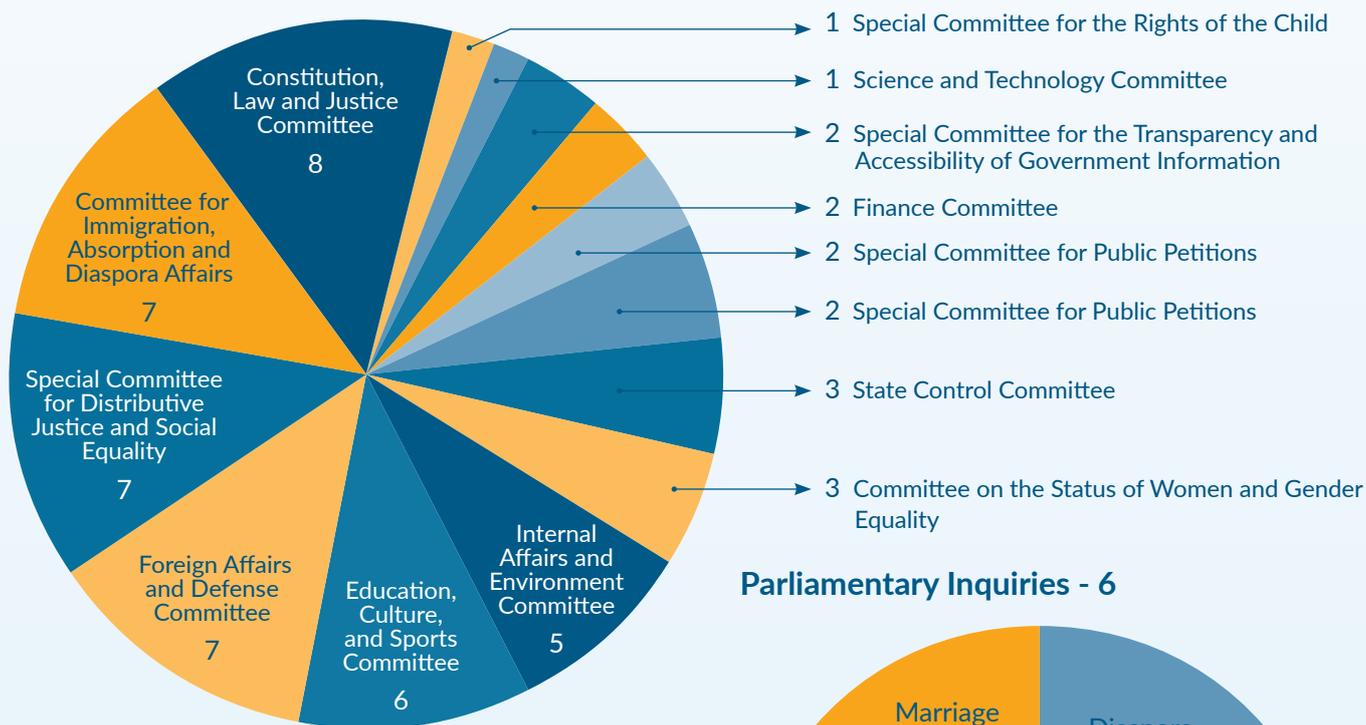
In contrast, "the Muezzin Bills" suddenly returned to the agenda, and it was decided to transfer them for continued work from the Committee of the Interior to the Constitution Committee. This too, will be among the subjects that we will hear about during the upcoming winter session of the Knesset, which is due to commence following the Jewish holidays.

\*Iron gates which were designed by the Jerusalem sculptor David Palombo, at the entrance to the Knesset complex.

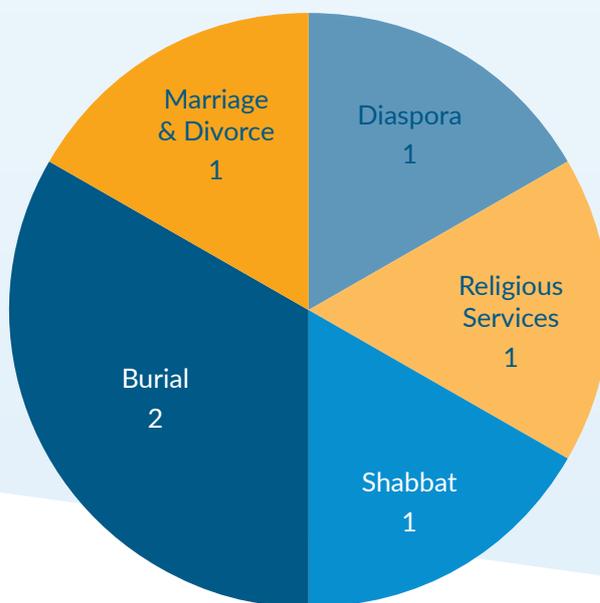
### Committee Meetings by Issue - 57



### Committee Meetings - 57



### Parliamentary Inquiries - 6



### MKs who Submitted Parliamentary Inquiries - 6

Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid)	2
Elazar Stern (Yesh Atid)	1
Yossi Yonah (Zionist Camp)	1
Tamar Zandberg (Meretz)	1
Michal Rozin (Meretz)	1

## What is the activity level of Knesset members on the topic of Religion and State?

Who are the ones that are dedicated to the issue and who leads the way? Who is in the secondary circle and lends their support from time to time? Who is indifferent to the topic? And who strongly opposes pluralistic Judaism and equality?

We divided the Knesset members into four levels of activity on the topic of Religion and State (the names appear in alphabetical order).

# 1

### The Committed Leaders

The MKs at the forefront of activities that advance tolerant and egalitarian Judaism and who are actively promoting a more pluralistic policy concerning Religion and State. MKs that put issues of religion and state at the top of their Knesset agenda.



- Oded Forer +
- Robert Ilatov +
- Avraham Neguise
- Elazar Stern
- Yehuda Glick
- Yael German
- Yael Cohen Paran
- Michal Rozin
- Merav Michaeli
- Nachman Shai
- Stav Shafir
- Aliza Lavie
- Ksenia Svetlova
- Revital Swid
- Rachel Azaria
- Tamar Zandberg

# 2

### The Supporters

MKs that support a more pluralistic policy in the areas of religion and state, however the topic is not a top priority of their parliamentary agenda. These MKs will join as supporters and will vote for policy that promotes pluralistic and egalitarian Judaism.



- Ayelet Nahmias Verbin +
- Yoel Hasson +
- Sofa Landver +
- Sharren Haskel +
- Akram Hasoon
- Amir Ohana
- Binyamin Begin
- Gilad Erdan
- Zehava Galon
- Yair Lapid
- Yoel Razvozov
- Yuli Edelstein
- +Yulia Malinovsky
- Isaac Herzog
- Meir Cohen
- Michael Oren
- Michal Biran
- Mickey Levy
- Manuel Trajtenberg
- Merav Ben-Ari
- Naftali Bennett
- Aida Touma-Sliman
- Esawi Frej
- Anat Berko
- Tzipi Livni
- Karin Elharrar
- Shuly Moalem-Refaeli

# 3

### The Indifferent

MKs that do not usually concern themselves with issues of religion and state. The topic is not on their agenda, and usually they will not join in on supporting the activities of their colleagues in this area.



- Avi Dichter
- Osama Sa'adi
- Ofir Akunis
- Orly Levi-Abekasis
- Ahmad Tibi
- Ayooob Kara
- Eyal Ben Reuven
- Ayelet Shaked
- Ayman Odeh
- Ilan Gilon
- Itzik Shmuli
- Eytan Broshi
- Eitan Cabel
- Elie Elalouf
- Eli Ben Dahan
- Eli Cohen
- Erel Margalit
- Jamal Zahalka
- Gila Gamliel
- Dov Khenin
- David Bitan
- Jackie Levy
- Zouheir Bahloul
- Haim Jelin
- Haim Katz
- Hilik Bar
- Hamad Amar

# 4

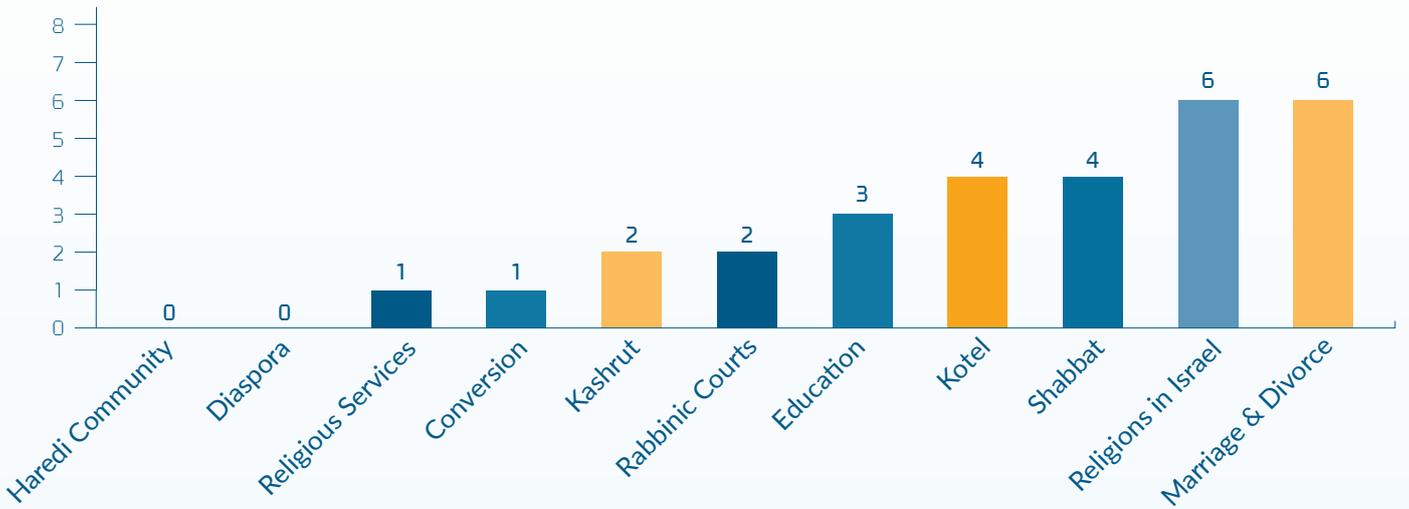
### The Opponents

MKs that do not support advancing the cause of freedom of religion and pluralism, but on the contrary, wish to reinforce the status of the orthodox monopoly and the Rabbinical establishment, and oppose any move towards gender equality or recognition of a multi-faceted Judaism.

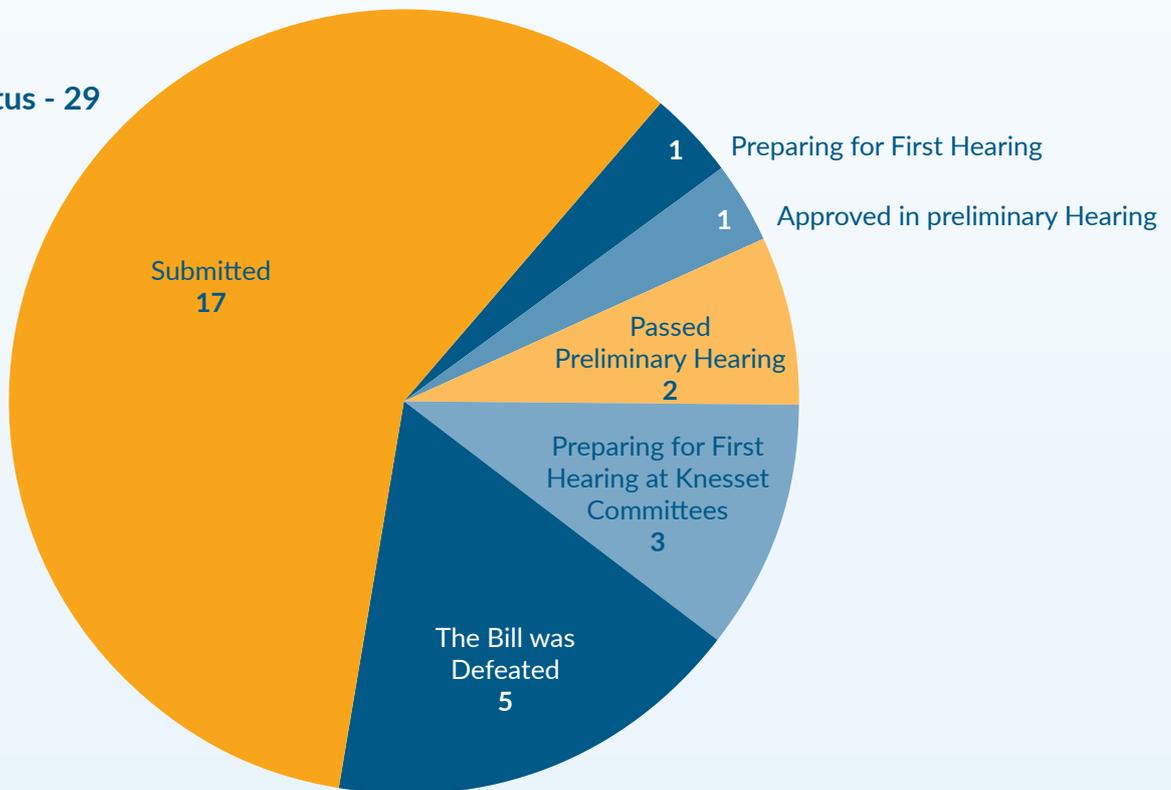


- Uri Ariel
- Uri Maklev
- Oren Hazan
- Bezalel Smotrich
- David Azoulay
- David Amsalem
- Zeev Elkin
- Yigal Guetta
- Yoav Ben Tzur
- Yakov Asher
- Yakov Litzman
- Yakov Margi
- Yitzhak Vaknin
- Yitzhak Cohen
- Yariv Levin
- Israel Eichler
- Yisrael Katz
- Moti Yogev
- Michael Malchieli
- Miki Zohar
- Menachem Moses
- Moshe Gafni
- Abd Al Hakeem
- Haj Yahya
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### Bills Submitted or Discussed - 29



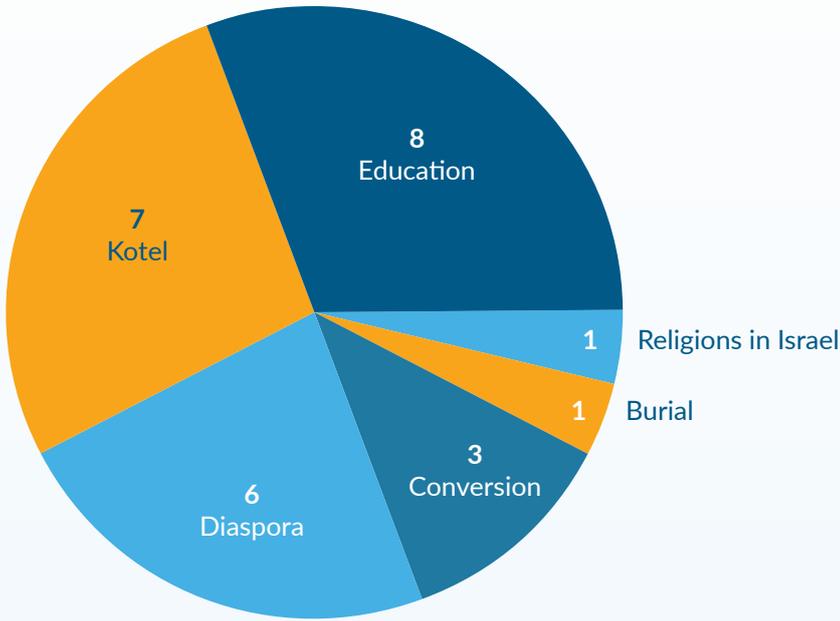
### Bills by Status - 29



### Bills by Party



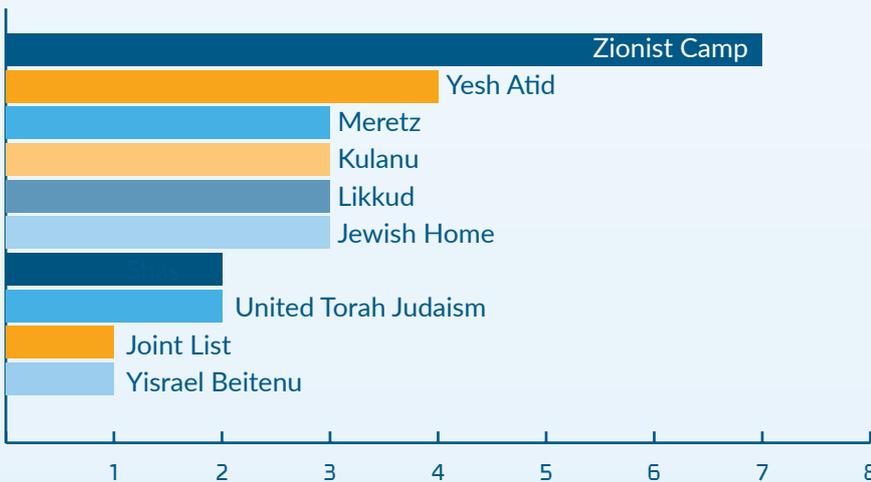
### Motions for the Agenda by Issue - 26



### Motions for the Agenda by MK - 29

Nachman Shai	3
Bezalel Smotrich	2
Michal Rozin	2
Merav Michaeli	2
Avraham Neguise	1
Yehuda Glick	1
Aliza Lavie	1
Rachel Azaria	1
Tamar Zandberg	1
Moshe Gafni	1
Menachem Moses	1
Michael Malchieli	1
Merav Ben-Ari	1
Shelly Yachimovich	1
Merav Michaeli	1
Mickey Levy	1
Anat Berko	1
Abd Al Hakeem Haj Yahya	1
Tali ploskov	1
Zehava Galon	1
Yulia Malinovsky	1
Itzik Shmuli	1
Yoel Razvozov	1
Yossi Yonah	1
Meir Cohen	1

### Motions for the Agenda by Party - 29





**Yuli Edelstein**

Likud

The freezing of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement was unnecessary, and I supported the previous solution. It is necessary to sit down together and return to negotiations.



**David Amsalem**

Likud

Where did the Reform (Jews) get the nerve to intervene? It was clear that the cancellation of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement had to happen. Jewish tradition is Israel's honor. I am not a religious Jew but I keep the traditions and I am deeply disturbed by this subject and regard it as part of my national honor.



**Miki Zohar**

Likud

If we agree with the Reform Western Wall Agreement, it will be spitting in the faces of many generations who dreamed about the Wall and prayed to it. We must preserve the status quo in the holy place and not allow external factors to change the current reality at the Western Wall plaza.



**Benny Begin**

Likud

I am very much dismayed regarding the latest developments. We must adhere to the compromise reached regarding the Western Wall Compromise Agreement. There is no other compromise possible as far as I can see.



**David Bitan**

Likud

They are submitting petitions to the Supreme Court of Justice all the time. We need to stop all these petitions. Just stop, they are unnecessary. Most of the population in the State of Israel is Orthodox or defines itself as Orthodox. On the other hand, most of the population in the United States is either Reform or Conservative.



**Oren Hazan**

Likud

Three public relations experts are trying to acquire a new kind of Judaism for themselves. After thousands of years it is impossible to invent something new. To adapt Judaism to the modern world is the beginning of the end. The Torah has seventy faces, but cannot be reinvented.



**Avi Dichter**

Likud

The relationship between American Jewry and the State of Israel is a strategic and even existential asset.



**Tzachi Hanegbi**

Likud

Today the Prime Minister authorized me to work along with the Government Secretary to find agreed upon solutions to the Western Wall crisis. A year and a half ago, the government decided on an agreement that would permit women's prayers at the southern part of the Western Wall. Due to essential difficulties which arose in this regard, and the strong opposition of the ultra-Orthodox parties, this morning a decision was made to freeze the previous decision. I will now try to hold a dialogue with all the parties involved in this sensitive issue, to examine whether there is a common denominator that will assist us in reaching a worthy solution.



**Yehuda Glick**

Likud

This imperialism of the Chief Rabbinate should be rejected out of hand.



**Avraham Neguise**

Likud

Diaspora Jewry is an asset to the State of Israel and we cherish its contribution to immigration and absorption in the State of Israel. We are brothers, love of Israel is unconditional.



**Ofir Akunis**

Likud

The Western Wall Compromise Agreement is the most balanced plan ... According to my beliefs, I am firstly a Jew, a Zionist, secular, Orthodox. However, as for the Agreement, I regarded the agreement which was reached at the time as a good and balanced consensual agreement. That's my opinion



**Naftali Bennett**

Jewish Home

It is important for me to say that the Western Wall Compromise was not cancelled. Everyone can pray at the "Ezrat Yisrael" that I established, but the Reform movements indeed did not get what they wanted. [They received] only a third of [their] demands.



**Bezalel Smotrich**

Jewish Home

As long as Reform Jews in Israel represent barely a fraction of a percentage, as opposed to an absolute majority of Orthodox Jews - and yes, also secular Israelis are secular Orthodox - it was clear that there was no sense in designing a public space that fit the Reform approach. It makes no sense. That's how it is in a democracy. If American Jewry decides to immigrate to Israel and there are three million Reform Jews, then there will be something to talk about.



**Aryeh Deri**

Shas

I am pleased that the government has accepted our demand to cancel the Agreement, that violates the holy status of the Western Wall. There is no doubt that the preservation of the status quo at the Western Wall also reflects the wishes of the majority, who regard the Western Wall as the most sacred place for the Jewish people. There is no room for destructive circles whose only purpose is desecration of the place.



**Moshe Gafni**

United Torah Judaism

I am pleased about the government's decision to stop this. This was our demand. This is an important and significant step, and I welcome the decision.



**Yaakov Asher**

United Torah Judaism

I wonder how intelligent people can conduct such a discussion. What has happened at the Western Wall all these years? Hundreds of millions of people from all over the world visited there: Christians and Jews of one sort and another. Recently, there have been premeditated provocations, which are well funded and well published in the media. A movement which hardly sanctifies the old - is suddenly fighting for the oldest stones.



**Israel Eichler**

United Torah Judaism

The Reform Foundation gangs do not represent American Jewry. They are the Reform Sicarii\* who incite against Israel. It's not a struggle about the Western Wall. They want to ban the Jewish religion in the public sphere. They use the police and the Supreme Court of Justice to fight Judaism. I warn the Supreme Court justices: according to law they are forbidden to interfere in the holy places.



**Yakov Litzman**

United Torah Judaism

The government's decision to freeze the Western Wall Compromise Agreement sends a clear message to the world that the Reform Jews have no access, and will have no access, to the Western Wall. The activity of the Haredi representatives in United Torah Judaism and cooperation with them has received heavenly assistance and success. I express my appreciation to the Rabbi of the Western Wall, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz and the Chief Rabbis of Israel, thanks to them we may sanctify the Lord in heaven.



**Yoav Ben Tzur**

Shas

If the provocations you are trying to create were connected to other houses of worship - you would not be making them. I don't know how much the religious issue really interests them. They want to change the basic way things have always been. No one can uproot tradition without hurting the feelings of worshippers.

\* Sicarii - a splinter group of the Jewish Zealots, in the decades preceding Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, heavily opposed the Roman occupation of Judea and attempted to expel them and their sympathizers from the area.



**Shuli Moalem**

Jewish Home

The Western Wall should be a place where everyone is permitted to pray.



**Uri Ariel**

Jewish Home

I am pleased that today the government approved the decision to restore the situation at the Western Wall to the previous status quo.



**Rachel Azaria**

Kulanu

Let there be no doubt that these decisions constitute a strategic blow to the State of Israel. We would do well to remember that every time we worked together (American Jewry and the State of Israel) we won. Together, we are the strongest, and we must not violate this alliance.



**Moshe Kahlon**

Kulanu

The true national strength and security of the Jewish people is in its unity. The relationship between the Jewish People living in Zion and their brothers in the Diaspora is a strong and sturdy bond and we must protect it with the utmost care.



**Michael Oren**

Kulanu

The Wall belongs to the entire Jewish people. Failure to comply with this government decision is an expropriation of Zionism.



**Avigdor Lieberman**

Yisrael Beiteinu

Today's annulment of the decision constitutes a severe blow to the unity of the Jewish people, to Jewish communities, and to the fabric of relations between the State of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora. The conversion bill law in its current form distances anyone who is attempting (or wishes) to become closer to Judaism.



**Yael Cohen Paran**

Zionist Camp

I look at the entire Jewish people and I am very anxious. We are fighting each other instead of uniting. There is a radicalization of hatred and division. The Reform and Conservative Jews prevent assimilation. We must go forth and see how we can act from within the Knesset to enact change.



**Eyal Ben Reuven**

Zionist Camp

A weak government that capitulates due to pressure and attacks many Jews who wish to pray as they are accustomed to - must be replaced as soon as possible.



**Manuel Trajtenberg**

Zionist Camp

The folly of the government's decision from this past Sunday is not only a spit in the face of Diaspora Jewry, but also a preservation of Israeli ignorance regarding the communities in the Diaspora. And this needs to be changed. As an economist, I know monopoly is bad, and the of monopoly a minority is even worse. Diversity strengthens us, and ignorance weakens us. The State of Israel is the State of the Jewish people in all its diversity and we must strengthen the solidarity between us, in all the streams of Judaism that exist.



**Tzipi Livni**

Zionist Camp

As Jewish Israelis, why should we care about the Western Wall and the Conversion Bill? Because it is important to us that Israel remains the state of the Jewish people and that Judaism should be what connects us - and not what divides us. The annulment of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement and the new Conversion Bill tear the Jewish people apart. The Prime Minister of the Jewish people is bent on causing division among us for [his] political survival, granting a monopoly to the ultra-Orthodox parties to the Judaism that belongs to all of us.



**Yoel Hasson**

Zionist Camp

If Netanyahu had it within his powers, he would have already called in Harry Potter to fix his decision about the Western Wall.



**Omer Barlev**

Zionist Camp

It will be a disaster if the State of Israel begins to determine who is more Jewish and who is less Jewish. This would constitute betrayal of the Zionist vision and undermine the idea of a common Jewish existence crossing beliefs, opinions and habits.

**Merav Michaeli****Zionist Camp**

Jewish Law (Halacha) has undergone changes over the years and developed along with everyday life, thanks to the wisdom of the Jewish people. It is time for that these changes and progress reach the Western Wall, as well. "The Jewish state is the only country in the world that does not recognize other types of Judaism. Israel is the national home, and not a halakhic home of the Jews, and as such, the conditions for diverse types of Jews, not just the Orthodox, should be equal.

**Erel Margalit****Zionist Camp**

I admit, it was difficult for me to stop the tears. The government's decision to cancel the Western Wall Compromise Agreement is not just another news item. The fact that a little girl is not allowed to stand next to her father at the Western Wall nor for a mother to stand next to her son is shocking to me.

**Ksenia Svetlova****Zionist Camp)**

I wish to remind Netanyahu that Israel is the national home of the Jewish people. Of every Jew in the world. Secular, Orthodox, Reform and Conservative. The task that we must fulfill is the opposite of that of Netanyahu and his partners.

To restore Israel to what it was intended to be - an egalitarian, democratic Jewish state, we must be open to every Jew. Not to withdraw inwards, like those who have assumed a monopoly on religion. I will continue to fight with any means at my disposal. I know I have many partners.

**Nachman Shai****Zionist Camp**

The cancellation of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement and the new Conversion Bill were two slaps in the face of world Jewry, and especially American Jewry. These government decisions drove a wedge between us, causing division between fellow Jews and damaging the fundamental values of the State of Israel.

**Stav Shaffir****Zionist Camp**

It is inconceivable that one faction of Judaism can take ownership of a place which is holy to everyone. While there are real disagreements among the various streams of Judaism as to what is the proper way to worship God, we must remember that there is more that unites us than what divides us. The least we can do is to allow all men and women to pray to the Creator according to the best of their understanding.

**Elazar Stern****Yesh Atid**

What does this mean in practice? A divorce between the State of Israel and Diaspora Jewry.

**Mickey Levy****Yesh Atid**

It's time we woke up, and quickly, because the relationship with world Jewry in general and the United States in particular - is disintegrating. We are losing the strongest supporter of the State of Israel in the world and the critical and close relationship with millions of Jews.

**Yoel Razvozov****Yesh Atid**

There is not one Knesset member who does not understand the importance of Diaspora Jews, and there is no one that does not understand the damage we have caused, and I can only apologize. I received many calls from a lot of Jews from all over the world. I hope they will come to their senses and think beyond considerations and narrow interests so that we can unite and rise above this situation, because this is what we need today.

**Isaac Herzog****Zionist Camp**

I am ashamed of the government's decision. It is simply a tragedy that the Western Wall - which has seen tragedies and joys, unification and division throughout the thousands of years of its existence - has now become a bone of contention and division amongst our people. We believe in joint action with the various streams of the Jewish people in the Diaspora. Certainly - we are brothers and sisters.



**Yair Lapid**

Yesh Atid

Yesterday, millions of Jews received a message that they are not welcome at the Western Wall. The whole country was thrilled to see President Trump, a Christian, going to the Western Wall, but yesterday the overwhelming majority of world Jewry were informed that they are prohibited from entering the holiest place for Jews. The main culprits are not the ultra-Orthodox. The main culprits are the cowards, namely: the Prime Minister and his ministers, who are well aware of the terrible significance to Jewish fate, but are interested solely in their political chairs.



**Aliza Lavie**

Yesh Atid

In the Jewish State, the government has officially stated that there are first-class Jews and second-class Jews. There has never been a government that has caused such a deep rift in the Jewish people. The Prime Minister surrendered all at once to a small and forceful group – both in the instance of the Western Wall, and in the case of the Conversion Bill.



**Zehava Galon**

Meretz

The freezing of the Western Wall Compromise Agreement is a disgraceful surrender to the ultra-Orthodox and an insult to the Jews of the Diaspora.



**Tamar Zandberg**

Meretz

Where do you derive the legitimacy to believe that only your way is the right way to be a Jew? The state granted a monopoly to a narrow stream of Judaism. They decide what is considered Jewish. "It is amazing how easy it is to get the Prime Minister to give in to pressure up and abandon the compromise agreement that he himself formulated, all while trampling anyone who is not right-wing, religious and Orthodox."



**Michal Rozin**

Meretz

A reasonable and balanced leadership would not have capitulated, but would have implemented the Western Wall Compromise Agreement immediately - with the clear understanding that the State of Israel is the national home of all Jews and not just the Orthodox stream. The Western Wall is a public site and as such belongs to the entire public, and cannot continue to serve as the private yard of the Orthodox establishment. Likewise, Judaism as a whole is comprised of many layers and it is wrong to reduce it to only one stream that is preoccupied with excluding others. I support the pluralistic organizations that are working day and night to restore Judaism to us.

Jewish Pluralism Watch - monitors Israeli elected officials' positions, statements, legislative initiatives and voting records in regard to matters of state and religion in Israel.

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## Would you like to learn more?

The Education and Activism Department at JPW offers a rich variety of workshops, lectures, meetings with Members of Knesset and Knesset study tours.

We will meet groups that wish to deepen their acquaintance with issues of religion and state, at any location and at any time convenient for you.

To coordinate a meeting, please contact Klil Atad, coordinator of the Division for Education and Activism at the JPW, at

[mishmar.education@gmail.com](mailto:mishmar.education@gmail.com)

