

Reaching Out Applauds Florida Prison Ruling

Reaching Out, a prisoner-outreach organization, applauded the decision of a Florida federal district court mandating that kosher food be served in Florida state prisons.

Reaching Out had previously filed a “friend of the court” brief in the case in May 2014. This brief, authored by attorney Nathan Lewin, contested Florida’s argument that denying kosher food to inmates was acceptable due to the “population explosion” seen in the program. The legal brief also contested Florida’s assertion that there was any justification for refusing to operate a kosher food program, noting that Florida stood in violation of the federal Religious Land Use & Institutionalized Persons Act – a religious freedom statute Reaching Out helped craft and pass into law in 2000.

“The observance of a kosher diet is a key

tenet of Judaism, and one which no state has the right to deny,” said Rabbi Shmuel Spritzer, head of the organization.

“We worked closely with the Justice Department who spearheaded the struggle in making sure Jewish prisoners in Florida State receive kosher food and are pleased that the court’s ruling rejected Florida’s argument that high interest in a kosher food program should prevent Jews from observing their basic religious beliefs. This was a victory for both the Jewish community and the cause of religious freedom in the United States.”

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