

National Conference on Soviet Jewry

NEWS RELEASE

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REPUBLICAN PLATFORM COMMITTEE HEARS SOVIET JEWRY TESTIMONY. - JEWISH GROUPS URGE U.S. INVESTIGATION; PRESSURE IN TRADE

The Republican Platform Committee today heard testimony and recommendations on the problems of Soviet Jewry. Mr. Richard Maass, Chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, speaking before the Committee, meeting in Miami Beach, Florida, asserted that the American people "had issued a mandate to their elected officials to exert every effort on behalf of Soviet Jews." Maass pointed out that "a petition campaign sponsored by the N.C.S.J. resulted in the collection of 1,400,000 signatures", and that Governors, State Legislators, Senators, Congressmen and other state and local officials had issued similar appeals on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Maass urged that the Platform Committee include a strong plank on Soviet Jewry. Among the specific recommendations Mr. Maass presented were:

1. The Soviet Union has in prior years obligated itself to the humanitarian principles of the reuniting of families. The Republican Party should "appeal to the Soviet Union to revitalize its program for the reuniting of families."
2. The Republican Party should pledge any administration to press the issue of Soviet Jewry before international bodies, particularly the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
3. The Voice of America must be "properly funded and expanded to include at least one full hour weekly, with Hebrew and Yiddish components, in line with its policies regarding other minorities in the U.S.S.R."
4. With respect to the harassment of Soviet Jews, "their rights to emigrate freely and their rights to have a full cultural and religious life while remaining in the Soviet Union. The Republican Party and its candidates must undertake to strenuously and consistently communicate the concern of the American people to Soviet officials."
5. That expanding trade "be seized as an opportunity to place the issue of Soviet Jewry on the agenda of talks between Soviet Government officials and United States businessmen and government officials."

6. That all resources of the Republican Party be utilized to help free the Jewish Prisoners of Conscience in Soviet labor camps.
7. That President Nixon immediately appoint a committee to investigate the international violations perpetrated by the Soviet Union and that the chairman of that committee report directly to the President.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry represents a mobilization of 34 major national Jewish organizations and local Jewish community councils and federations in support of Soviet Jews.

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