IMPORTANT JOINT STATEMENT TO THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY

Rabbinic leaders and organizations across the Orthodox spectrum have, individually, declared the health threat presented by COVID-19 a mortal threat (sakanas nefashos). Today, we, leaders of major American Orthodox Jewish organizations, join together to reiterate, as clearly and forcefully as we can, our collective view. We have heretofore urged not only full compliance with all health guidelines issued by federal, state, and local governments, but have gone beyond those pronouncements in urging our communities to remain at home and avoid, to the maximum extent feasible, any outside interactions. In keeping with those guidelines, we have mandated scrupulous hygiene and social distancing, and urged everyone to stay home and minimize physical interaction.

We have taken the unprecedented and deeply distressing step of shuttering the central fixtures of our lives - our shuls, yeshivos and schools - and certainly to eliminate other gatherings.

WE HAVE DONE SO BECAUSE AS OBSERVANT JEWS WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PLACE SUPREME VALUE ON PROTECTING HUMAN LIFE (PIKUACH NEFESH).

The undersigned, representing the broad spectrum of organized Orthodox Jewry in the United States, wish to underscore collectively that which each of our organizations has already stated unequivocally.

STAY HOME; SAVE LIVES.

May Hashem swiftly remove this plague from the world and bless us all with health, peace and tranquility.

Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, Executive Vice President, Agudath Israel of America

Rabbi Mendy Mirocznik, Executive Vice-President, , Igud HaRabbanim - Rabbinical Alliance of America

Rabbi Shmuel Blech, Chairman, Rabbi Moshe Weisberg, Co-Chair, the Lakewood Vaad

Farley Weiss, President, National Council of Young Israel

Moishe Bane, President, Allen Fagin, Executive Vice President, the Orthodox Union

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, President, Rabbi Mark Dratch, Executive Vice President, Rabbinical Council of America

Additional signatories are forthcoming and will be featured in updated statements.