



Israel  
Religious  
Action  
Center



Israel Movement for Reform  
and Progressive Judaism  
התנועה הרפורמית והתנועה מתקדמת בישראל

Religious Freedom in Action

Alternative

## Kashrut Certification

While Israeli law does not require businesses to be kosher, those that hope to cater to customers who keep kosher must not simply serve kosher food, but also be certified kosher by the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate. As the Chief Rabbinate holds a monopoly over kashrut certification, it has become known for high taxes, mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism, as confirmed by a scathing report by the State Comptroller after his investigation into the matter in 2017. Many Israeli businesses wish to be kosher but desire an honest and accessible alternative to the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly.

IRAC has been working to allow for alternative kashrut certification. After initially losing our Supreme Court case, the President of the Supreme Court announced in October 2016 that they would hold a second hearing in our petition – a very rare occurrence. After the hearing in February 2017, in September the Court ruled that while the Chief Rabbinate is the only organization authorized to grant kashrut certification, businesses without Rabbinate certification can still present themselves as “kosher”, without using the term, as long as they meet certain religious criteria and are supervised by another body. This loophole opened the door to the creation of other kashrut certification authorities. Soon after, the Tzohar Rabbinic Authority decided to open a kashrut certification authority in direct competition with the Chief Rabbinate. This new certification is hopefully the first of many alternatives that will be created as a result of IRAC's victory, and is the first crack in the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly over Jewish life in Israel.

