



Israel
Religious
Action
Center



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

Religious Freedom in Action

Advancing

Public Transportation on Shabbat

Public transportation on Shabbat is either non-existent or very limited and expensive, leaving much of the Israeli population stuck at home, especially the most vulnerable groups such as elderly Israelis living alone, those who cannot drive due to disabilities, and those who cannot afford cars. Israeli law mandates that public transportation accommodates those with disabilities, but this lifeline for participation in society is taken from them every seventh day. We do not believe the government has the right to decide whether or not transportation is vital or the right to dictate how Israel's diverse society practice Judaism or observe Shabbat.

In July 2016, IRAC filed a petition to the Supreme Court on behalf of 7 citizens in which we demanded that the state conduct research into the need for public transportation on Shabbat, as the Transportation Ministry claimed that transportation is not a vital public need on Shabbat without proper research. The court ordered us to withdraw our petition and instead ask a public transportation company to request a license to operate on Shabbat from the Ministry of Transportation. If and when this is refused, we can return to court.

IRAC will continue working to rectify this problem, as the government should not have the right to determine how its citizens observe Judaism or take away the freedom of its most vulnerable citizens for one day every week.