

Plan leaves children behind

President Bush's plan for public education, "Leave No Child Behind," was to give 3.5 million children in failing schools the right to transfer to better schools. But educators have complained that while the law mandates that they find space in better schools, it gives them no way to create the spaces. Besides finding space, superintendents must supply transportation to the new schools, hire new teachers and buy more supplies. Schools in the southern states also must try not to violate desegregation court orders, which assign students to schools on the basis of race.

California law already had an open enrollment rule. Any student can leave his neighborhood school and transfer across town as long as there is room. There is seldom room. In Baltimore, 30,000 children were eligible to transfer; 347 applied to fill only 194 places. In Chicago, 145,000 can leave, but only 1,170 will get to attend other schools. In Los Angeles, 223,000 students in 120 failing schools have found no room at all.

Even with the lack of space, the real crux of the matter appears to be that parents prefer that their children attend local schools in their own communities.

✓WHAT YOUR CHAPTER CAN DO

■ **Investigate** where your area schools stand and how many are judged as failing. Check your local newspapers online for articles about test scores. Also find out if there are openings for students in the better schools.

■ **Ask** your local school administrators if they need community help. Many of your members are

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- Haya Varon, Community Chair
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willing and able to read to students or supervise library visits. Write an article for your bulletin about the local educational problems and ask for chapter volunteers.

■ **Look up** additional information on education on the web. Go to www.aasa.org (site of the American Association of School Administrators). Also check out www.cnn.com.

Get out and vote

This November's elections will see drastic changes in our political climate. Voters will elect all 435 House members as well as senators in 34 states and governors in 36. The elections will determine control of the House, which the GOP now controls by six votes, and the Senate, which Democrats control by one seat.

✓WHAT YOUR CHAPTER CAN DO

■ **Ask** your members to discuss the importance of voting. Emphasize the effects on public education, support for Israel, the composition of local and federal courts, and the health of our economy.

■ **Encourage** members to call elderly members and friends, and offer rides to the polls, or if time permits, encourage absentee voting.

Do not discuss or print anything that refers to candidates or polit-

ical parties. Women's American ORT is a nonprofit organization and is not permitted to participate in partisan politics.

■ **Look up** the web site of the League of Women Voters, www.lwv.org, for more information on the elections.

JCPA on civil liberties

At its 2002 Plenum, The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), an organization that counts Women's American ORT among its members, issued a Resolution on Civil Liberties Issues Raised by War on Terrorism. The resolution states in part, "Some of the efforts to investigate and prosecute suspected terrorists, however, have raised civil liberties concerns. ... The JCPA believes it is essential that a proper balance be struck between combating terror and protecting civil liberties."

✓WHAT YOUR CHAPTER CAN DO

■ **Discuss** Women's American ORT's Public Policy Resolution on Democratic Values, available on our web site at www.waort.org/demvaluesres.htm.

■ **Read** the JCPA's resolution at www.jewishpublicaffairs.org. Click on "Jewish Security and the Bill of Rights" under the Resolutions Index.