



**Their Cry,
Our Battlecry!**

Lighting the Path to Hope



Rabbi Moshe Margaretten and Tzedek's Mission to Change Lives

It all began with a promise. Standing in the bleak confines of a prison visitor's lobby one spring afternoon in 2011, Rabbi Moshe Margaretten witnessed a heart-wrenching scene: young children reciting the Mah Nishtanah to their father, who sat in a prison uniform. Their mother wept quietly by their side. The family would spend Pesach apart, their joy overshadowed by incarceration's harsh reality.

That moment ignited a fire in Rabbi Margaretten's heart. For years, he had worked tirelessly to support incarcerated individuals and their families, but this scene sharpened his focus. He resolved to do more, not just to alleviate the pain but to reform the system itself, exemplifying the core mission of the Tzedek Association, which Rabbi Margaretten founded to protect and save lives.

Guided by these principles, Tzedek has worked tirelessly behind the scenes for years, advocating for those in desperate need. Their efforts span from improving the criminal justice system to addressing humanitarian crises worldwide. Fast forward to 2018. After nearly a decade of lobbying, fundraising, and navigating political opposition, the First Step Act was signed into law by President Trump. The legislation, aimed at reducing recidivism and promoting rehabilitation, was a monumental victory. Rabbi Margaretten had been the driving force behind the effort, rallying bipartisan support for a bill that many had deemed impossible. It was a triumph that earned him an invitation to light the menorah at the White House Chanukah party, a symbolic nod to his unwavering commitment to justice. But for Rabbi Margaretten, this was just the beginning.



From Justice to Family- Tackling Infertility

The battle for justice reform taught Rabbi Margaretten many lessons: perseverance, the power of bipartisan collaboration, and the importance of a mission-driven approach. These lessons became invaluable as he turned his attention to a new cause, one that would touch the lives of countless couples yearning to build families.

The issue came to his doorstep in the form of a heartfelt plea. A group of 300 couples, struggling with infertility, approached him with a simple but profound request: help us. They shared stories of financial strain and emotional despair as they navigated a healthcare system that often left them behind. Even with the incredible support of remarkable organizations

such as Bonei Olam and ATIME—which spend millions upon millions of dollars annually to help these couples—many are still left with overwhelming out-of-pocket expenses. This is especially true for families who already have one child but dream of expanding their families, as they often receive little to no financial assistance. Unlike in Israel or Europe, where fertility treatments are covered by insurance, the U.S. system frequently forces couples to shoulder the staggering costs alone. At first, Rabbi Margaretten hesitated. His expertise lay in criminal justice reform, not healthcare policy. But the weight of their stories and the injustice of their struggle spurred him into action. “How can I ignore them?” he said.



Crafting a New Path Forward



Determined to make a difference, Rabbi Margaretten began to lay the groundwork. He tapped into his extensive network in Washington, hiring lobbyists and conducting research to gauge support for policy changes. Slowly but steadily, his efforts began to bear fruit.

Senator Roger Marshall, a physician and Republican, emerged as a key ally. Together, they began drafting a bill to mandate insurance coverage for fertility treatments. The effort mirrored the bipartisan strategy that had succeeded with the First Step Act. Rabbi Margaretten also explored alternative routes, including tax credits for couples undergoing treatment and regulatory changes under the Affordable Care Act.

Beyond advocacy, Rabbi Margaretten mobilized thousands of Jewish Americans to rally behind the First Step Act, urging congressmen, judges, and communities to support the legislation. His steadfast efforts earned him the honor of lighting the menorah at the White House Chanukah party in 2019, a recognition of his eight-year battle for meaningful reform.

The journey for infertility has been anything but smooth. Opposition from pro-life groups complicated the push for IVF legislation, particularly in Republican-led states where debates over embryo preservation and abortion rights intersected. Yet, Rabbi Margaretten's resolve has never wavered. With allies like Senator Ted Cruz and support from a growing coalition, he's managed to keep the conversation alive and the momentum building.

In February 2023, Rabbi Margaretten's team prepared to introduce a bill addressing IVF access in both the Senate and House. Around the same time, a heartbreaking case from Alabama underscored the urgency of their efforts. A woman battling cancer had stored her only viable embryo at an IVF center within a hospital. Tragically, a disturbed individual broke into the facility and destroyed numerous embryos, including hers, eliminating her last chance for a child. The case sparked a legal battle, with the Alabama courts initially ruling the destruction as murder. This emboldened opponents of IVF, who saw the case as an opportunity to push for stricter regulations.



Adding to the contention, the Alabama Supreme Court later upheld a ruling requiring couples to either preserve embryos indefinitely or donate them. These decisions created new hurdles for IVF clinics and families, threatening access to treatments. Understanding the potential impact on the Jewish community, Rabbi Margaretten worked with allies such as Senator Cruz and Senator Britt from Alabama to craft legislation that would safeguard IVF while addressing federal funding concerns. Their bill proposed withholding Medicaid funding from states imposing overly restrictive regulations, effectively slowing the push for limitations. Despite significant opposition, Rabbi Margaretten's persistence secured support from 33 senators, laying the groundwork for meaningful reform.

More Than a Mission- A Lifeline for Thousands



Rabbi Margaretten's advocacy extends beyond policy. Tzedek facilitated the evacuation of the last Jew from Afghanistan amid the chaos of the Taliban takeover, coordinated critical aid and transportation for evacuees from Israel after the October 7th attacks, and even donated ambulances to aid communities in Ukraine during their time of need and rescue Holocaust survivors. These acts, often carried out behind the scenes, spanning continents and crises, highlight Tzedek's unwavering dedication to helping Klal Yisroel and beyond. Rabbi Margaretten's ability to pivot between causes, from criminal justice to infertility, reflects a singular focus: alleviating suffering and uplifting lives.

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His efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic further underscored his commitment. Recognizing the heightened risks faced by incarcerated individuals, he spearheaded a

campaign to secure home confinement for vulnerable prisoners. The initiative not only saved lives but also laid the groundwork for broader reforms in compassionate release policies.

Under Rabbi Margaretten's leadership, the Tzedek Association has become a trusted name in Washington, known for championing justice and compassion. From achieving early release for Mordechai Samet to advocating for over 30,000 inmate releases during COVID through the CARES Act, their work has directly transformed countless lives.

Last week, their efforts bore another milestone. President Biden's clemency for 1,500 incarcerated

individuals included provisions based on ideas Rabbi Margaretten had championed years earlier. It was another reminder of the ripple effect his work creates.

The Personal Touch- Stories of Impact

Behind every legislative victory lies a tapestry of personal stories; families reunited, lives rebuilt, and hope restored. One such story involves a couple who had exhausted their savings on unsuccessful fertility treatments. When they learned of Rabbi Margaretten's advocacy, they found renewed hope.

Another poignant example comes from his work in prison reform. A man serving a lengthy sentence for a nonviolent offense was reunited with his family after benefiting from the First Step Act. "I never thought I'd see my kids grow up," he wrote in a letter to Rabbi Margaretten. "You gave me a second chance."

These stories are not isolated incidents. They are the culmination of a vision that prioritizes humanity and compassion in every endeavor.

Almost There- The Road Ahead

Despite these victories, Rabbi Margaretten knows there is much more to be done. His work on infertility legislation is far from complete. "We have three paths forward," he explains: legislation, regulatory changes, and tax credits. Each route demands resources, time, and relentless effort.

The first path involves legislation, which would mandate that insurance companies provide coverage for fertility treatments. This approach ensures the broadest and most consistent access to care but faces significant hurdles in Congress, where debates over healthcare mandates remain

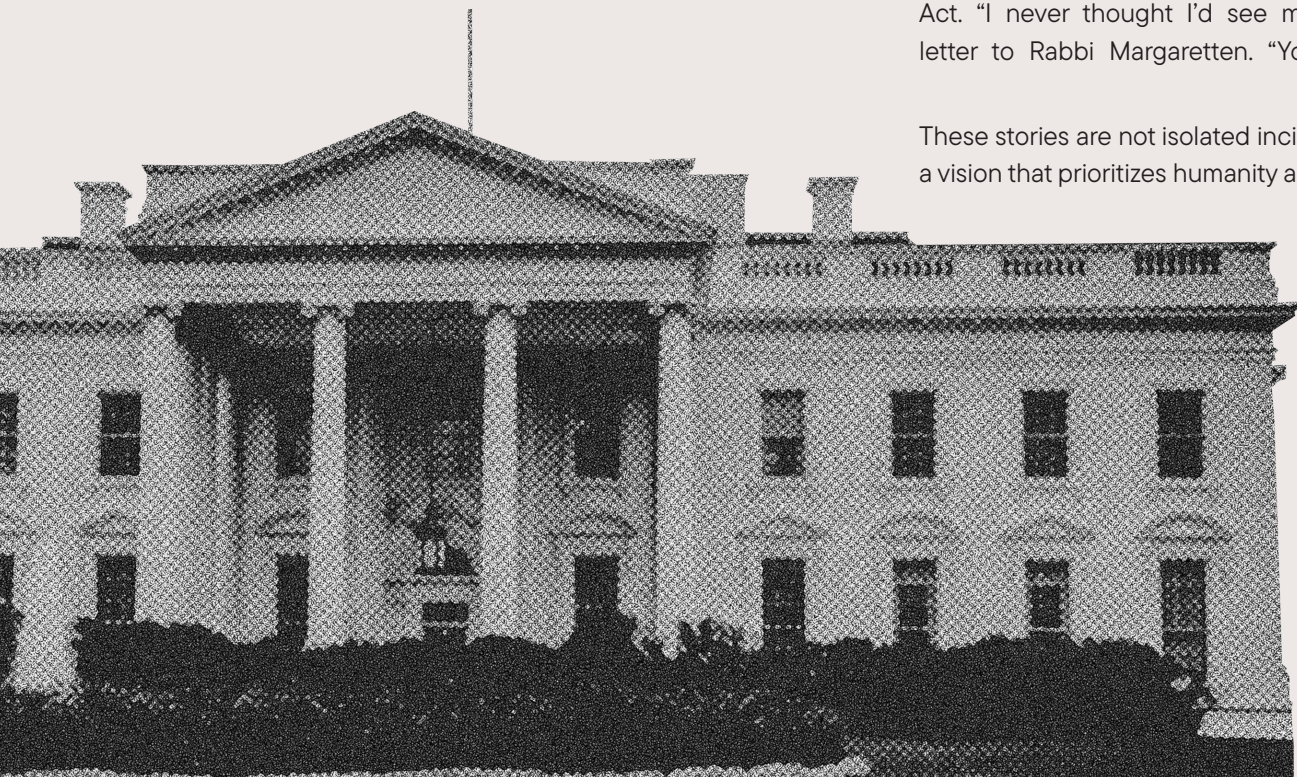
contentious. Still, growing bipartisan support offers hope that a breakthrough is near.

The second path focuses on regulatory changes under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). By advocating for updates to existing policies, Rabbi Margaretten aims to include fertility treatment coverage within federally approved insurance plans. While this method bypasses legislative gridlock, it requires navigating complex bureaucratic processes that could take years to implement fully.

The third path seeks to provide tax credits to couples undergoing fertility treatments. This option

offers immediate financial relief to families, allowing them to recoup some of their expenses. Unlike the other routes, this approach requires only a simple majority in the Senate, making it a more attainable short-term goal.

The stakes are high. "But we're so close," Rabbi Margaretten says. "With the right support, we can overcome these last barriers and make fertility treatments accessible to everyone who needs them." Each path represents a vital step toward his vision of a world where financial hardship is no longer a barrier to building a family. Together, they form a roadmap to lasting change, one that is within reach.



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Lighting the Way: Rabbi Moshe Margaretten's Historic Role at the White House Chanukah Celebration

In 2019, Rabbi Moshe Margaretten was personally invited by President Donald Trump to light the menorah at the White House Chanukah party, an honor that marked a significant moment in both his advocacy for prison reform and his involvement in Jewish community affairs.

At the Chanukah party, hundreds of guests, including dignitaries, congress members, and everyday citizens, enjoyed a festive celebration. The highlight was Rabbi Moshe Margaretten lighting

the menorah, making history as the first chassidic rabbi in full attire to do so. Margaretten had been invited to officiate due to his part in the First Act's passage. Despite initial hesitation, he accepted the invitation with guidance from the Skverer Rebbe. Margaretten's efforts for justice reform, including lobbying for the bill and helping families affected by incarceration, were central to the event's theme. The menorah he lit was a unique copper piece made by inmates at Otisville Correctional Facility, tying the celebration to his then ongoing work in criminal justice.



J.D. Vance and Tzedek-A Strategic Partnership for Klal Yisroel *How did this picture happen?*

In the political corridors of Washington, Rabbi Moshe Margaretten's name carries weight, and his relationships often lead to unique opportunities for the Klal. One such connection is with Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, a partnership forged through shared vision and purpose.

It all began with a simple introduction. A friend in D.C. politics urged Rabbi Margaretten to meet a rising star, a young man gaining popularity while running for Senate in Ohio. Intrigued, Rabbi Margaretten arranged a Zoom call and immediately recognized Vance's potential. "He was going places," Rabbi Margaretten recalls. Determined to support his campaign, Tzedek tapped into innovative strategies, including a cutting-edge social media program that targeted potential voters with tailored messaging. The tool, which identified voter concerns in specific districts, helped amplify Vance's platform on education and other key issues. "It worked incredibly well," Rabbi Margaretten notes, adding that the team secured the program at a bargain, ensuring significant reach.

After J.D. Vance's Senate victory, the relationship deepened. Grateful for Tzedek's instrumental role, Vance and his team kept in close touch. Later, as rumors swirled about Vance being considered as a vice-presidential candidate, Rabbi Margaretten stepped in again, rallying donors to support his efforts and helping ensure fundraising success. The bond between the two grew even stronger when Vance attended a family sheva brachos, a gesture of appreciation for Rabbi Margaretten's unwavering support.

The partnership reached new heights when Senator Vance invited Rabbi Margaretten to join him on a campaign flight to and around Michigan. They spent hours discussing critical issues and strategizing ways to push these priorities forward. "It was a unique opportunity to advocate for our community before he officially takes office," Rabbi Margaretten reflects. Their shared journey underscores how building bridges in politics can yield lasting benefits for Klal Yisroel and beyond.



Did You Know?

Facts About Infertility Coverage

- Many countries, including Israel and parts of Europe, provide full or partial insurance coverage for fertility treatments.
- In the U.S, the average cost of a single IVF cycle for a frum couple typically costs \$24,000 per cycle with medications adding an additional \$3,000 to \$7,000
- Since most patients require multiple cycles, the total costs per year can go up to \$60,000.
- Only 19 states in the U.S. currently have laws requiring some form of infertility insurance coverage, leaving the majority of couples to pay out-of-pocket.

Spotlight on the First Step Act

The First Step Act, championed by Rabbi Margaretten, accomplished several transformative goals:

- **Reduced Sentences:** Lowered mandatory minimums for nonviolent offenses, reducing excessive prison terms.
- **Earned Time Credits:** Allowed inmates to earn credits toward early release by participating in rehabilitation programs.
- **Compassionate Release:** Expanded eligibility for compassionate release for elderly and terminally ill prisoners.
- **Prison Reform:** Improved prison conditions.

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