

Process to Determine Whether to Take a Congregational Position on an Issue

Final – Approved by Board 3/8/11

Context

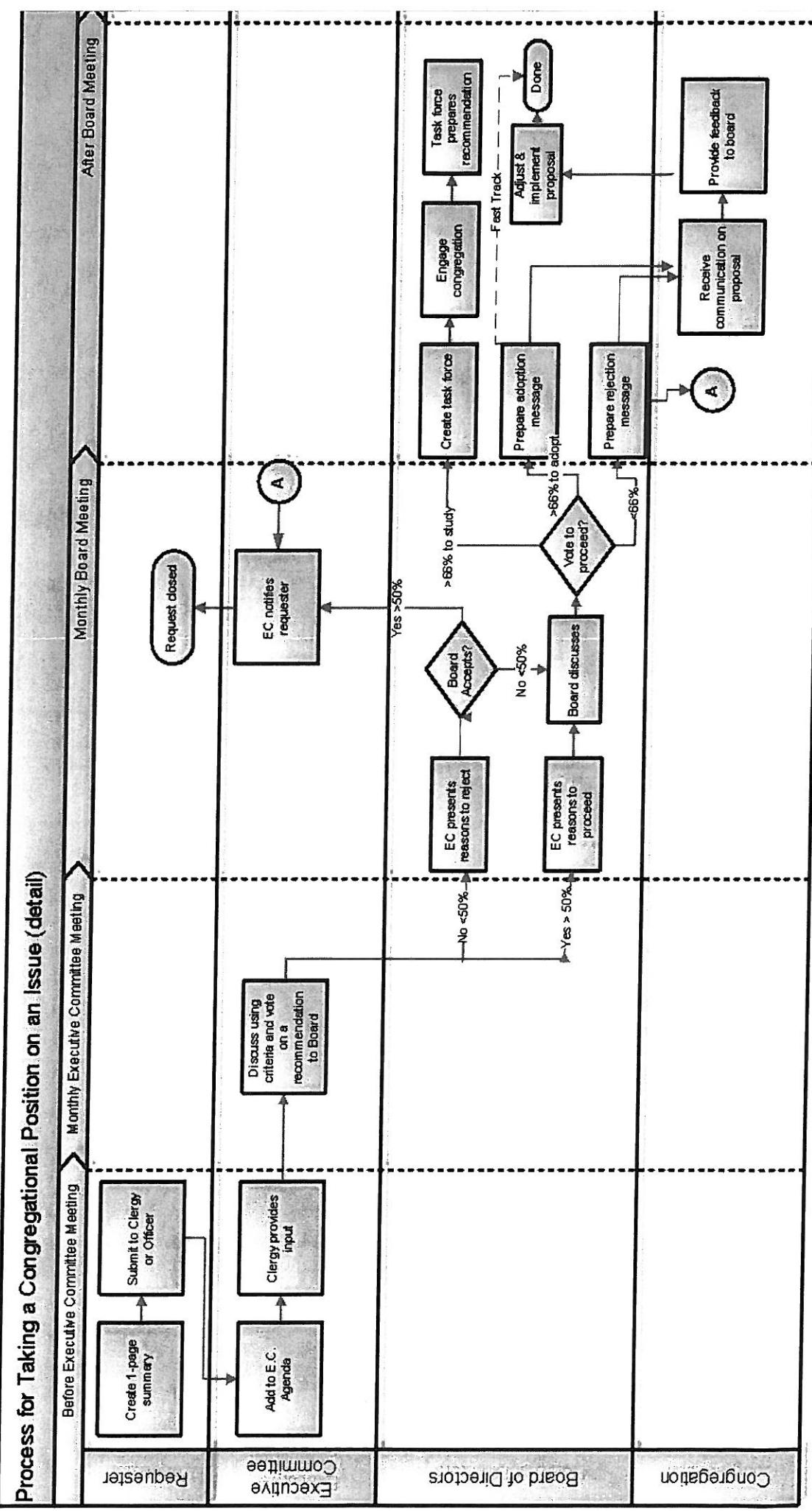
From time to time clergy or congregants may request that the Temple take a position around a particular issue. The position could be in the form of a resolution, a public statement or a congregational action. In the interests of inclusion, fairness, and *shalom bait* it is appropriate that the congregation establish a policy for vetting these requests.

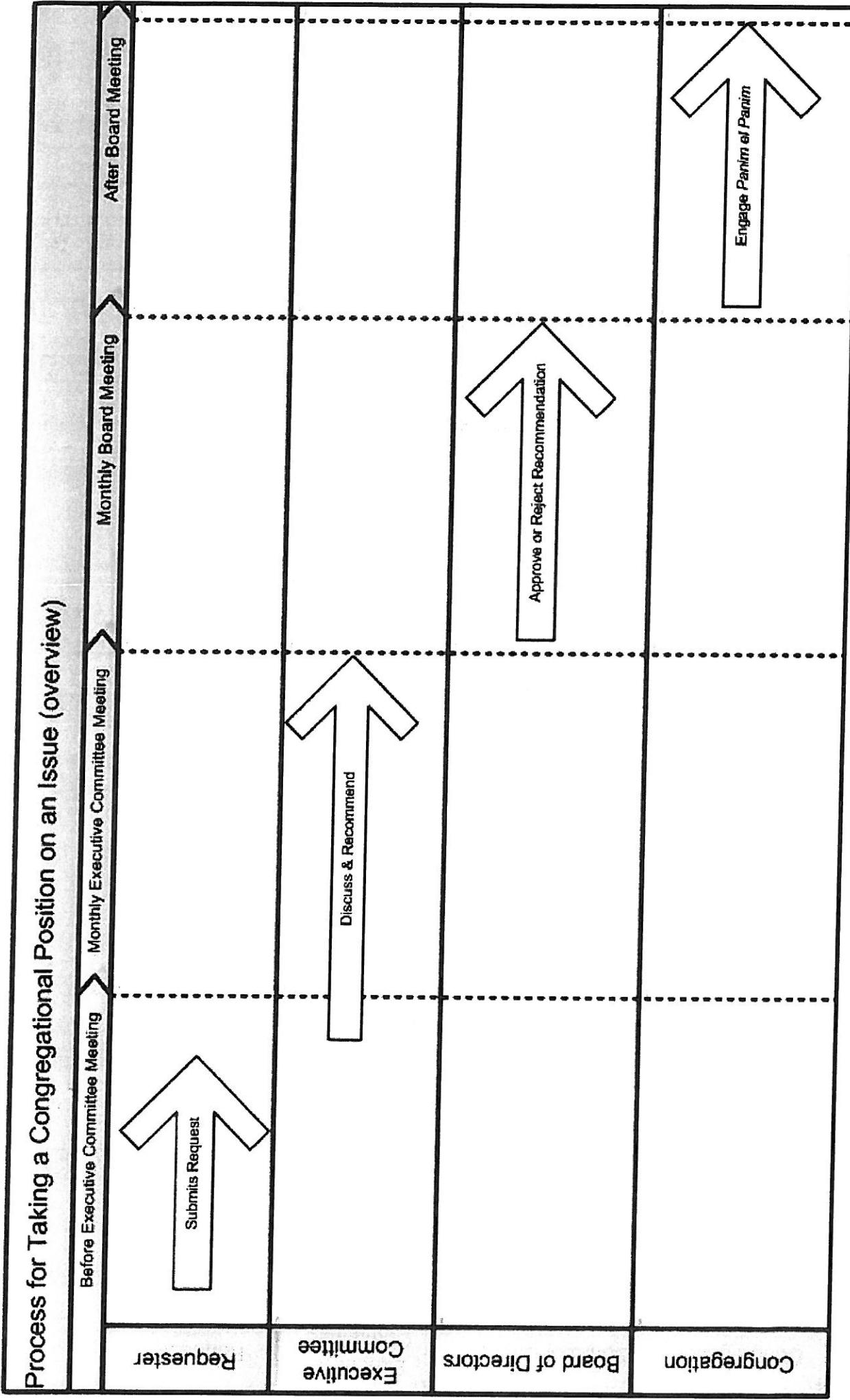
Process Overview

1. The member who wants the Temple to take a position or action on a given issue writes a one-page summary of the request, the reasons for supporting it, and the specific position or action the person proposes the Temple take, and gives this to one of the Temple clergy or Temple officers.
2. The clergy or Temple officer submits the request to consider a Temple position or action to the Executive Committee for discussion at its next scheduled meeting.
3. The Executive Committee discusses the request in the context of our “Criteria for Determining Issue Involvement” (see below).
4. The Executive Committee makes a their recommendation by a majority vote whether the Temple should take a position or action. The Board should discuss this recommendation at the next scheduled Board meeting. A close vote and the reasons behind it would be part of the report to the Board.
5. Recommendations presented to the Board will be presented in the form of a motion by a member of the Executive Committee. Approval of a recommendation that the Temple take a position or action requires a super majority of two-thirds of elected Board members present for the vote. Following the Board vote on the Executive Committee recommendation, the Board may take any of the following actions:
 - a. Following Board approval of a recommendation that the Temple take a position or action, the Board may obtain congregational input as to the proposed Temple position or action through a congregational forum or other means. The Board may also create a task force to gather information and develop recommendations to the Board as to the specific position or action the Temple should take. Following any such information gathering processes that follows Board approval of a recommendation that the Temple take a position or action, the Board will receive and consider task force recommendations and/or congregational input, if any, and determine the specific action the Temple will take.
 - b. Following Board approval of a recommendation that the Temple take a position or action, the Board may vote to implement the action immediately.

- c. Following a Board decision that the Temple not take a proposed position or action, the decision will be communicated to the requestor. In addition, the decision may be communicated to the congregation by the President and/or the Rabbi, if the Board determines such communication is appropriate
- 6. Upon the Board's final adoption of a recommendation that the Temple take an action or position, the President and/or Rabbi will communicate the rationale for the Temple's action or position to the congregation as soon as possible.
- 7. The procedure as described above could take several months depending upon the time of year. If an issue is particularly time-sensitive, the President may call a special session of the Executive Committee and the Board, but the process itself should not be short-circuited.

Process for Taking a Congregational Position on an Issue (detail)





Criteria for Determining Congregational Involvement *

Criterion	1	2	3	4	Comment
Minimally	Moderately	Highly	Extremely		
Perceived impact on the Congregation					
1. Congruence with our Congregational vision					
2. Has direct Jewish impact distinct from the impact upon other individuals or groups (e.g., anti-Semitism, discrimination, or attacks against the Jewish community)	None	Minimal	Some	Extensive	
3. Has direct impact on both our community and other groups, but has a Jewish component distinct from the impact on the general community (e.g., issues involving separation of church and state, hate crimes, civil rights violations affecting non-Jewish groups or individuals)	None	Minimal	Some	Extensive	
4. Has no direct Jewish impact, but is important or significant to many members of the Jewish community (e.g., gun safety)	None	Minimal	Some	Extensive	
Perceived effectiveness of action					
5. Support or opposition is likely to make a difference.	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	
6. Temple is best positioned to champion the issue	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	
Consensus of community opinion					
7. There is likely to be general consensus on the issue within our community	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	
8. A significant group and/or opinion leaders within our community are likely to have a negative view of our involvement in this issue	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	

* These criteria are guidelines that may be helpful in analyzing the Congregational impact of a request. Decision-makers are encouraged to decide on a case-by-case basis whether to use this tool quantitatively or simply to facilitate discussion.

Criteria for Determining Congregational Involvement *

Criterion	Comment
Congruence of the issue with our congregational vision	
Perceived impact on the Congregation	
Issue has direct Jewish impact distinct from the impact upon other individuals or groups (e.g., anti-Semitism, discrimination, or attacks against the Jewish community)	
Issue has direct impact on both our community and other groups, but has a Jewish component distinct from the impact on the general community (e.g., issues involving separation of church and state, hate crimes, civil rights violations affecting non-Jewish groups or individuals)	
Issue has no direct Jewish impact, but is important or significant to many members of the Jewish community (e.g., gun safety)	
Perceived effectiveness of action	
The Temple's support or opposition is likely to make a difference.	
The Temple is the best positioned organization to champion the issue	
Consensus of community opinion	
There is likely to be general consensus on the issue within our community	
A significant group or opinion leaders within our community are likely to have a negative view of our involvement in this issue	

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