

NEWS

...from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2006

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Stephen Landfear
(773) 296-4141

Feigenholtz Passes Legislation to Allow Display of Religious Symbols on Condo Doorways

Measure Approved in Response to Ban on Mezuzahs

CHICAGO – Residents of condominiums throughout Illinois will be able to display religious symbols on their door posts due to passage of legislation sponsored by state Representative Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago. The measure passed unanimously out of the Illinois House last week and awaits the Governor's signature.

“Banning the display of mezuzahs, which is a religious obligation for Jewish people, is unconscionable,” Feigenholtz said. “This legislation will clarify condo regulations to reflect clear legislative intent to make it permissive to do so.”

Senate Bill 2165, which was sponsored by state Sen. Ira Silverstein and Rep. Feigenholtz, was introduced after several Chicagoland condominium associations banned all decorations from resident's doorways. These bans created problems for some of the Jewish condo residents of Shore-Line Towers at 6301 N. Sheridan who were puzzled when their mezuzahs, (a small case enclosing a scroll of text from the Torah that Jews are religiously obligated to hang on the door post of their homes), kept disappearing. They later learned that mezuzahs were covered under the condo association ban on doorway decorations.

Feigenholtz's legislation provides that a managing board of a condo association may not institute any rule or regulation that prohibits a reasonable accommodation for religious practices. This would allow for not only the display of mezuzahs but for religious symbols of other faiths, such as the Christian crucifix or Islamic crescent.

“Making sure that people of all faiths are not prevented from practicing their religious responsibilities is a matter of basic civil rights,” said Feigenholtz.

###