Opinions

Wrong Way, Parkway

Parkway School District's decision to hold all of its high school graduation ceremonies on a Saturday next May seems to be a very bad idea at a very tense time. It's a bad idea because graduation day should be a time when everyone comes together in a spirit of pride for accomplishment and anticipation of what lies ahead. No high school senior should feel left out because of a wrongheaded move that leaves Jewish students who observe the Sabbath out in the cold.

And the change comes at a particularly bad time, nationwide. With the hateful, anti-Semitic shots from Charlottesville still fresh in everyone's mind, no public school district should make a move that tells Jewish students that their heritage and their faith are not important. If anything, Parkway and all public school districts across the country should be going out of their way to teach inclusion, not approving policies that brand one group as outsiders. It is not true that the ceremonies would be held on a Saturday is the fact that this year, on the day chosen by the district, May 19, Shavuot begins at sundown.

When opposition to the decision became public, including an online petition (http://bit.ly/parkway-petition) started by Parkway Central student Hannah Maurer; district officials began to see into the possibility of a change; a spokesman for the district said it hopes to have a decision soon.

The petition had garnered nearly 2,000 signatures as of Tuesday. That support for a more sensible solution should prompt Parkway to reconsider and show the same compassion of all its students, not just certain groups.

Problems with the Saturday date were made clear to members of the Parkway School Board by Rabbis James Bennett of Shaare Emeth and Brigitte Rosenberg of United Hebrew.

"They were putting all these concerns about convenience ahead of the morals and the values that Parkway School District has emphasized so strongly in their curriculum," Bennett said. His three children all graduated from Parkway Central. And Rosenberg's daughter Zoe is set to graduate from Parkway in May. "I don't want to be a family who's facing this.

Parkway school board president and United Hebrew congregant Beth Feldman said, "The thing that was changed was that it makes it easier for families to get in and out of the ceremonies, a process that is difficult at Queeny Park, where graduations have been held in recent years.

Plus, the Family Arena is bigger, elimi-

The respect and joy in celebration united us all. We were one.

At that time, the divisions among Jews seemed so minor. It was a late summer breeze. He deserves credit for keeping the process moving for the last three years. He is the one who should work with, and what we did did not work out.

She also acknowledged the timing was bad, given the tone of debate nationwide, and didn't want to see anyone feel excluded or feel the need to have an alternative ceremony on a day other than Saturday.

There was a rise in anti-Semitism, Feldman said, and "I think people don't want to be separated because of their faith. They want to be included, just like everyone else is." The Rabbis Righteous in the Loop met and said they could not be part of anything that would be a step back.

"There is no reason for this," Feldman said. "We as a school board and school district have a very broad perspective of all the things that we have to take into consideration when we make this kind of decision," she said, and "we were trying to do the best that we could with what we point of view from the liberal left.

But the U.S. team has a very broad perspective of all the things that we have to take into consideration when we make this kind of decision, she said, and we were trying to do the best that we could with what we point of view from the liberal left.

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ment and the Sabbath. The district's goal — to standardize and centralize graduation ceremonies for all of its high school graduates — isn't necessarily a bad one.

But if the only date available for next May at the Family Arena is a Saturday, the district should postpone the consoli-
dated date, or offering a choice, even if it would mean a change in graduation dates and their families deserve no less.

No matter what the intent, the result should not have made Jewish families in Parkway choose between commerce and the Sabbath. The district's goal of creating an alternative is commendable, but the result unfortunately blocked a significant number of students from attending.

The result is not a change, but a lesson in how to stop discrimination and discrimination discrimination.

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In contrast to his icy relations with for-
mer President Barack Obama, Netayahu enjoys a cordial and openly friendly relationship with President Donald Trump. If Trump, through his son-in-law Kushner, can come to terms with Netayahu on seeking a two-state solution, it might just be the break-through.

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