The “If I Were a Rich Man Tour” is the first campaign of Bend the Arc’s sister organization in Washington,

Concerned Americans urge Congress to stop punishing the most vulnerable

CANTON– U.S. Representative Jim Renacci (R-Ohio) is the target of a group of young, progressive American Jews traveling across the country to urge Congress to stop voting to line their own pockets while demanding more of the nation’s most vulnerable to reduce the deficit, balance the budget and protect funding for critical programs and services. Fresh off of a stop at the Republican National Convention and an appearance on MSNBC’s Hardball, the tour is visiting Representative Renacci because he is one of the wealthiest members of Congress to oppose efforts this summer to allow the Bush era tax cuts to expire on those making more than $250,000 annually.

On **Friday, August 31**, the “If I Were a Rich Man Tour” stopped in Canton to ask Representative Renacci why he is voting against the best interests of his constituents. Inspired

by their Jewish values and organized by *Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice*, this group of nine volunteers is traveling across the country with a moral message about tax fairness to urge Congress to pass legislation where all Americans pay their fair share.

“Millionaires in Congress trying to force working people to pay more than their share in taxes is like a school yard bully stealing lunch money from kid,” said **Alan van Capelle, CEO of** *Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice*. “American Jews have never stood on the sidelines when we have seen injustice and we aren’t going to start now.”

The “If I Were a Rich Man Tour,” which began on August 22 and will continue through September 7, is organizing Jewish Americans and others in eight states to call on Congress and the administration to allow the Bush era tax cuts to expire on those making more than $250,000 annually. The tour participants, who will make appearances at both the Republican and Democratic conventions, are also meeting with Jewish community leaders, interfaith groups, union organizations and other likeminded individuals and groups along their route to support tax fairness for all Americans.

Each of the targeted members were among those in Congress who opposed efforts this summer to allow the Bush era tax cuts to expire for those earning more than $250,000 a year. In the Senate, the targeted members opposed S.3412, the Middle Class Tax Act of 2012. In the House, the targeted members supported final passage of H.R. 8, the Pathway to Job Creation through a Simpler, Fairer Tax Code of 2012. Additionally, the targeted House members voted against a Democratic party-sponsored effort to replace H.R. 8 with the Senate-passed legislation, S. 3412.

Participating in the “If I Were a Rich Man Tour” are team leader Ellie Axe from Boston; Helen Bennett from Boston; Aaron Brickman from Oakland; Rebecca Green from Los Angeles; Tera Greene from Los Angeles; Yitz Jordan from Los Angeles; Rabbi Margie Klein from Boston; and Sonya Kuznetsov from Minneapolis.

“Our country is faced with enormous challenges and it is frustrating to see so many of our elected leaders voting against the best interest of their constituents and the long-term economic viability of our country,” said **Ellie Axe, the “If I Were a Rich Man Tour” team leader**. “It’s time

that Americans of all backgrounds stand up and shout ‘enough is enough!’ I am proud to be a part of this team and look forward to working with them to shine a spotlight across the country on the hypocrisy of the nation’s richest congressmen.”

The “If I Were a Rich Man Tour” is the first campaign of *Bend the Arc’s* sister organization in Washington, *Bend the Arc Jewish Action*, which works directly with policymakers and elected officials to hold them accountable to the needs of the most vulnerable to create justice and opportunity for all.

Additionally this summer, *Bend the Arc Jewish Action* unveiled a petition, which has been signed by hundreds of Americans, urging Congress to ask those making over $250,000 per year to pay their fair share. Interested parties can add their voice to this effort at www.bendthearc.us/jewish-action.

“Both our Jewish tradition and our American experience make abundantly clear that in order to have the kind of strong and just society we want to see, everyone needs to pay their fair share,” said **Hadar Susskind, director of** *Bend the Arc Jewish Action* **and** *Bend the Arc Jewish Action PAC*. “Bend the Arc Jewish Action is carrying that message to Congress and we are thrilled that the ‘If I Were a Rich Man Tour’ is carrying it around America.”