A group of liberal American rabbis have denounced Republican presidential candidate John McCain's campaign as leaning toward "hate speech" in its treatment of Democratic rival Barack Obama.

"The manner in which Senator McCain, Governor [Sarah] Palin and their supporters refer to Senator Obama is creeping toward hate speech," Rabbis for Obama said in a statement on Thursday.

"As leaders of the Jewish community we are well aware of the dangers of using inflammatory political language to marginalize individuals and groups. Increasingly those speaking on behalf of the McCain campaignhave been demonizing Senator Obama as not being like us."

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