



2019

**AUGUST RECESS
ADVOCACY TOOLKIT**

JCPA

JEWISH COUNCIL
FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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THE JEWISH COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS (JCPA) is the hub of the Jewish community relations network. We advise and support the field by convening the Jewish community to deliberate key issues, and identify and develop policies, strategies, and programs for our network. The JCPA has an unparalleled capacity to mobilize grassroots activism through our network of 17 national and 125 local member agencies. Our policy team serves as a resource for our network and helps the community relations field express the consensus policy views to national leaders and influentials.

August Advocacy: An Overview

In August, most Members of Congress schedule in-district meetings in their home states while Congress is in recess. This is an important opportunity for Jewish community relations councils (JCRCs) to advocate on priority issues with members of Congress. JCPA developed this toolkit, with tips and talking points, to assist you in preparing for these meetings.

2019 Congressional Recess Timeline

Senate Recess: August 3 – September 6

House Recess: July 29 – September 6

Summary of Key Messages on Priority Issues

This year we suggest prioritizing the following issues that are currently before Congress for consideration:

Immigration

- End the detention of asylum seekers, families, and children—with or without their parents—and reallocate funding to community-based alternatives to detention, which are more humane and cost-effective.
- Cosponsor the GRACE Act (S. 1088/H.R. 2146) and other similar legislation that would set an annual refugee admissions floor of 95,000—the historic average.
- Pass the NO BAN Act (S. 1123/H.R. 2214), which would repeal the discriminatory Muslim travel bans.

Criminal Justice and Higher Education

- Cosponsor and support the inclusion of the REAL Act (S. 1074/H.R. 2168) and the Beyond the Box for Higher Education Act (S. 1338/H.R. 2563) in the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

Reproductive Rights

- Support the Women's Health Protection Act (S. 1645/H.R. 2975), which would enable health care providers to deliver abortion services without medically unnecessary limitations that are more burdensome than those imposed on medically comparable procedures.

Partnership Fund for Peace

- Pass the bipartisan Partnership Fund for Peace Act (S. 1727/H.R. 3104), which would create people-to-people partnerships and joint opportunities for economic development among Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans.

Holocaust Education and Survivor Services

- Cosponsor the Never Again Education Act (S. 2085/H.R. 943), which would establish grants for Holocaust education programs and teacher trainings.
- Pass the TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act (S. 2179) to ensure that Holocaust survivors have access to the care and services that align with their needs.

In-District Meetings

Tips for Making a Personal Visit to a Legislator

- Call the legislator's office to make an appointment.
- Follow the scheduler's instructions for requesting a meeting. This may include an email request. Be sure to include the number of people participating and what issues you want to discuss.
- Confirm the appointment a day or two prior to your meeting.
- Make sure to arrive 5-10 minutes early. If the legislator or official is late, be patient and flexible.
- Don't be disappointed if your meeting is with a staff person. There is great value in educating and building a relationship with the key staff people on your issues — they play a vital role in decision-making in the legislative process.
- Bring information about your organization and a one-pager outlining each policy position you are discussing to leave with the policymaker or staffer. You can find prepared one-pagers in the Talking Points section.

Preparing for the Meeting

An effective visit should include the following components:

- A clear statement about your organization and why you are there.
- An explanation of the issue(s) and what you want the decisionmaker to do about it.
- One or more personal stories illustrating why the issue is important to you and your community. *This may be a great opportunity, depending on your legislator's orientation, to discuss your views as a person of faith.*
- A request for a commitment: "will you support/oppose this proposal?"
- A thank you letter.

Assigning Roles

It is important to prepare for your meeting ahead of time by assigning roles and agreeing to time allotments. Considering that you have a limited timeframe for your meeting, it is important to stay focused and to ensure that you cover your full agenda. If you have a small group, give everyone an opportunity to present. If you have a larger group, ensure that you identify speakers. We suggest meeting beforehand to set the agenda and script. Inform your delegation on the position of the legislator that you are meeting with and what you are asking of them.

Leader: Confirms meeting time and location. Introduces the group and the Jewish Community Relations Council and JCPA briefly. Keeps time and ensures that the visit is on track, and that everyone has a chance to speak. Collects business cards from legislative staffer at the end and leaves the legislative leave-behind materials at the end.

Issue Presenter: Delivers the message, making it personal (by telling a story or sharing a personal experience), and speaks to why the legislator should act. Makes “the ask” and is prepared to respond depending on the legislator’s position. (See pages 7-8 for how to deal with different stances).

Social Media Reporter:

- Takes pictures of group during the visit.
- Tweets and shares the experience on Facebook after the visit.

Creating a Meeting Agenda

Opener:

- Express thanks for meeting with the delegation and collect business cards from staff.
- Introduce the group (individually, if a small group).
- Provide brief intro to the JCRC and JCPA: who we are, how many we represent.
- Tell why you are here: to introduce the issue(s) you’re advocating for today.
- Thank legislator for past support. A review of your legislator’s voting record should reveal a vote on a bill or cosponsorship of legislation that you appreciate (www.congress.gov/members).

Issue Presentation:

- State the problem that must be addressed by policy change.
- State the policy solution and why JCPA/JCRCs support this position.
- Personal story: share your experiences or perspective.
- State “the ask,” what they can do (refer to “How to Deal with Agreement or Opposition” on pages 7 and 8).
- Wait for a response – be sure to listen!
- Offer to be a resource or to send additional information.

Wrap-up:

- Review comments, commitments, and follow-up requests for the issue.
- Thank legislator/staff for their time.
- Leave your business card and legislative materials.

After the Meeting

Thank You Letter: It is very important to email a thank you letter to the individual(s) with whom you met. In addition to saying thank you, it should include a written reminder of what took place at the meeting, any action you are asking the legislator to take and, if relevant, their commitment to cosponsor, support, or oppose a specific piece of legislation.

Debrief and Meeting Report: After your visit, it is important to debrief about the meeting and to follow up with any requests for additional information made by the congressional office. We also recommend writing a brief summary of what took place that includes the following:

- Date, time, and name of person with whom you met.
- Questions asked by the legislator or staff person.
- Follow-up materials or information requested by the legislator or staff person.
- Summary of the legislator's position and willingness to support your requests.

Keep this information for future reference, share it with your coalition partners, and email it to Tammy Gilden at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

How to Deal with Agreement or Opposition

What if the policymaker **STRONGLY AGREES** with my position?

- Thank the policymaker.
- **Ask the policymaker to take a leadership role on this issue:**
 - Make a public statement in support of this issue
 - Urge colleagues to support the issue
 - Pressure House or Senate Leadership to take up the issue and to educate undecided colleagues
- **Ask the policymaker's advice about talking with other policymakers**—whom to talk with, what arguments make the best case for the issue, and what media strategy will be most effective in gathering support for the policy.
- **Ask what information or constituency would be helpful in swaying additional policymakers** to your position. Then work to produce these materials or advocates.
- Thank the policymaker again.

What if the policymaker **AGREES** with my position?

- Thank the policymaker.
- **Assure the policymaker of your continued interest in the issue and your continued support for the position they have taken.**
 - Ask if you can count on the policymaker to take more of a leadership role on the issue
 - Ask what the policymaker is currently doing to promote the issue and what the Jewish and broader faith community can do to help
 - Ask if the policymaker is aware of the proposed legislation related to the issue, and follow up with materials if necessary
- **Ask if the policymaker would be willing to help in any way beyond voting.** If yes, refer to the tips under **STRONGLY AGREES**.
- Thank the policymaker again.

What if the policymaker is **UNDECIDED** or **NONCOMMITTAL**?

- Thank the policymaker.
- **Inform the policymaker of your interest in the issue or legislation.**
- **Ask about the policymaker's viewpoint** to investigate whether his/her position arises from personal or political factors, a lack of information, misinformation, or a combination of these factors. Adjust your strategy accordingly.

- Present the case as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Ask if there are specific groups or individuals from whom the policymaker would like to hear on this issue.
- Offer to provide information that will help inform the policymaker about the issue.
- Thank the policymaker again for the opportunity to talk with them.
- Express thanks for their support or disappointment for nonsupport once the policymaker has indicated a position.
- Follow up by providing the information you promised and/or that addresses the policymaker's reservations. Send a positive story from the Member's district and emphasize how individuals in the district would be helped by the proposed legislation.
- Stay in touch to nurture the relationship with the policymaker.

What if the policymaker is **OPPOSED** to my position?

- Thank the policymaker for the opportunity to present your views.
- Determine how strong the policymaker's position is, and upon what it is based. If the opposition is not vehement, it may be worth trying to change his/her position.
- If the policymaker appears movable, present information that addresses his/her concerns. Make sure that the policymaker hears from constituents who support your position. Strategize and present the case most likely to resonate with this particular policymaker.
- Thank the policymaker again for the opportunity to present your views.
- Follow up by providing the information you promised and/or that addresses the policymaker's reservations. Send a positive story from the Member's district and emphasize how individuals in the district would be helped by the proposed legislation.
- Stay in touch to nurture the relationship with the policymaker.

What if the policymaker is **STRONGLY OPPOSED** to my position?

- Thank the policymaker for the opportunity to talk.
- Ask him/her not to lobby colleagues on the issue.
- Write and express your disappointment in the position and/or vote taken. Don't expend your time and energy trying to move this particular policymaker.

Issue Briefs

The following section contains issue briefs with background information and topline messages along with more detailed information. These briefs can serve as talking points for your meetings and double as one-pagers that you can leave behind with legislators and/or their staff.

At the back of this booklet, you will find an Advocacy Report Form that can help you track the outcomes of your meetings and ensure adequate follow-up. We encourage you to share these with JCPA so that we can help advance our network's advocacy.

End Detention for Vulnerable Immigrants

JCPA urges the federal government to immediately end the detention of vulnerable immigrants, the “zero tolerance” family separation policy, and the denial of due process to those in our custody or seeking our protection. Criminally prosecuting migrants, traumatizing children and tearing apart families, and imprisoning them in inhuman conditions conflicts with the values of family unity, dignity, and justice we hold dear as both Jews and Americans.

Recent changes to U.S. immigration policy have placed tens of thousands more immigrants—including children and asylum seekers—in detention facilities and unlicensed shelters. The inhumane conditions at immigration detention centers and border holding facilities violate federal law and standards. Abuse is systemic. Eyewitnesses detail horrific conditions, such as overcrowding and denial of adequate medical care, shelter, food and clean water, and basic sanitation.

At the same time, new policies like “Remain in Mexico” and “metering” bar vulnerable populations from entering the U.S. to seek asylum at Ports of Entry, a legal right enshrined in both U.S. and international law. Wait times are up to a year. Kidnapping, rape, and murder of those who remain in Mexico is common, forcing many to chance the perilous journey of crossing between Ports of Entry. Most are fleeing unspeakable violence, trafficking, and coercion in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, countries with the world’s highest murder rates.

- **Urge the Administration to end the “zero tolerance” family separation policy, which remains in force, and immediately reunify all separated families.** The Administration can end “zero tolerance” at any time, without legislation. Separating children inflicts irreparable psychological trauma on both parents and children, many of whom are already traumatized.
- **Congress should end the detention of asylum seekers, families, and children—with or without their parents.** Jailing asylum seekers, children, and other vulnerable immigrants is inhumane and cruel. Abuse in immigration detention is systemic and has been for years according to the Department of Homeland Security. There are credible reports of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children and adults in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody. In addition, detaining a family costs between \$300-\$800 per day, draining funding and resources that could be used to address the humanitarian crisis or pursue real national security threats.
- **Reject proposals to remove protections for vulnerable children provided by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act and the Flores Settlement Agreement.** Allowing unaccompanied children to be deported more quickly risks returning them to the very violence and exploitation they fled. Undermining the Flores agreement would wrongfully expand family and child detention in jail-like conditions. The Administration is pushing Congress to overturn the health and welfare standards that protect children from long-term detention so that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) can jail families indefinitely, despite widespread opposition from medical professionals and ongoing reports of abuse.
- **Reallocate funding from detention to community-based alternatives to detention (ATDs) like case management and legal orientation programs, which are more humane**

and cost-effective. Under the Family Case Management Program, a pilot program ended in 2017, families were provided resources to help them navigate the asylum application process and court proceedings. The program had a 99.6% appearance rate at court hearings and a 75% appearance rate for deportations, at a cost of just \$36 per day per family. We urge for the casework be operated by a nonprofit.

For more information, please contact Tammy Gilden, Senior Policy Associate at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the hub of the Jewish community relations network, representing over 125 local Jewish community relations councils and 17 national Jewish agencies. Together our network builds consensus on behalf of the entire Jewish community to promote a just and pluralistic American society, advocate for human rights around the world, and support Israel's quest for peace and security.

Keep Our Nation's Doors Open to Refugees and Asylum Seekers

For over 70 years, JCPA has advocated on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers who hope to build a better life for themselves and their children. Over the past two years, the Administration has instituted a number of sweeping changes to U.S. asylum and refugee policies, such as significantly reducing overall U.S. refugee admissions, entry for refugees from several predominantly Muslim countries, and significantly expanding detention for immigrants and asylum seekers.

Each year, the President must set an annual ceiling for refugee admissions by September 30. The U.S. refugee resettlement cap is currently set at just 30,000 for FY19, the lowest ceiling set by any president since the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established in 1980. It is unlikely that the U.S. will resettle even that many, despite the unprecedented refugee crisis. The United Nations estimates that the number of forcibly displaced people due to conflict, violence, and persecution is now 68.5 million, 25 million of whom are refugees.

Our immigration policy must balance national security concerns with the protection of civil and human rights. Closing our nation's doors to immigrants and refugees contradicts the fundamental American values of refugee protection, family reunification, and economic opportunity and the Jewish belief in "welcoming the stranger." JCPA and its network have always been deeply committed to maintaining a generous immigration system and have played an integral role in welcoming refugees in the U.S. for decades.

- **Cosponsor and support the GRACE Act (S. 1088/H.R. 2146) and other similar legislation that would set an annual refugee admissions floor of 95,000—the historic average.** This legislation would ensure the preservation of the refugee resettlement program and U.S. leadership in providing safe haven to persecuted people.
- **Support the NO BAN Act (S. 1123/H.R. 2214).** This legislation would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, repeal the discriminatory Muslim travel bans, and limit Presidential authority to enact similar bans in the future. [Click here to read the Jewish letter in support of the NO BAN Act.](#)
- **Provide the necessary oversight to ensure that the United States actually resettles 30,000 refugees in FY19.** This is particularly important because in FY18, with a Presidential Determination of 45,000, the U.S. only resettled 22,491 refugees. As a nation built by immigrants and refugees, the U.S. should seek to maximize, not minimize, the number of people we welcome and protect. Family reunification and generous refugee admissions must be cornerstones of our immigration policy.

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Support the REAL Act and the Beyond the Box for Higher Education Act

People who are incarcerated or who have criminal or juvenile justice records often experience barriers to educational opportunities that harm rehabilitation. Each year, approximately 600,000 people are released from prison and 40% of them return within three years. Expanding access to educational opportunities during and after prison can help significantly improve outcomes, such as enhancing economic security and job prospects, lowering unemployment rates, increasing earning potential, and expanding career paths.

The federal Pell Grant program was established to help make higher education and technical training more accessible for millions of low-income students. However, the 1994 Crime Bill barred most incarcerated students from receiving Pell Grants. As a result, the number of prison education programs has fallen dramatically. Even after release from prison, obstacles to higher education remain. Most colleges and universities ask criminal justice, juvenile justice, and/or school disciplinary questions in their admissions processes. Not only does this have a chilling effect on those who seek to apply, research also shows that rejection rates for those with convictions can be 12-13 percentage points higher than for those without.

Members of Congress should cosponsor and support the inclusion of the REAL Act (S. 1074/H.R. 2168) and the Beyond the Box for Higher Education Act (S. 1338/H.R. 2563) in the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

- **The REAL Act would restore Pell Grant eligibility to people currently incarcerated in state and federal prisons.** Studies have shown that recidivism rates drop significantly for people who earn a post-secondary degree, which can help justice-involved individuals overcome obstacles, prepare for the workforce, and successfully reintegrate into society. Lifting the ban would save \$365 million per year through reduced incarceration.
- **The Beyond the Box for Higher Education Act would encourage colleges and universities to remove criminal and juvenile justice questions from their admissions applications.** Almost 70% of colleges and universities collect criminal justice information for prospective students, which many schools use to make admissions decisions and which also has a chilling effect on those who seek to apply. Colleges and universities that provide opportunities for the estimated 70 million Americans who have an arrest or conviction record to earn a postsecondary degree or training certificate can help reduce the harmful consequences of justice involvement and contribute to more positive outcomes for individuals, their families, and their communities.

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Cosponsor the Women's Health Protection Act

JCPA is deeply concerned about the growing efforts to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and limit women's reproductive health care access, with states around the nation taking up extreme anti-abortion bills. These measures undermine women's reproductive freedom, endanger women's health, and criminalize women who get abortions and doctors who perform them. [In fact, in Alabama, a grand jury has already indicted a woman who was shot in the stomach while pregnant for the death of her unborn child, while dropping charges against the shooter.](#)

Though Alabama's new law is the most extreme so far, other states, such as Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Mississippi, have adopted or are close to adopting bills that effectively ban abortion, including "heartbeat" and other similarly restrictive laws. Nearly 30 abortion bans have been introduced, passed, or signed into law in 2019 alone. JCPA has been committed to safeguarding and strengthening the spirit and impact of *Roe v. Wade* since the Supreme Court ruling in 1973. Ending a pregnancy is a difficult and personal decision that should only be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor and others she chooses to involve.

- **Members of Congress should cosponsor and support the Women's Health Protection Act (S. 1645/H.R. 2975).** The bill would permit health care providers to deliver abortion services without limitations that are more burdensome than those imposed on medically comparable procedures, do not significantly advance patient health or the safety of abortion, or make abortion more difficult to access.
- **Medically unnecessary regulations increase costs, decrease efficiency and number of providers, and delay procedures, negatively impacting the quality of safe and legal abortion and shuttering clinics across the country.** Further, a woman's power to make her own, faith-informed decisions is obstructed when she is required to receive inaccurate or misleading information or clinically unnecessary services like ultrasounds, in-person counseling, and waiting periods.
- **With more than 20 pending lawsuits challenging restrictive or unconstitutional state laws, now is the time to address these threats with federal legislation.** Due to legislative attacks designed to undermine Supreme Court precedent, patients' ability to make their own decisions about reproductive health care varies widely from state to state.

Dissent: The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America has long standing policy of not joining in JCPA [statements] on reproductive rights: "[The Orthodox Union] cannot endorse a public policy that does not reflect the complex response of halacha to the abortion issue. In most circumstances, the halacha proscribes abortion, but there are cases in which halacha permits and indeed mandates abortion. The question of abortion is a sensitive one and personal decisions in this area should be made in consultation with recognized halachic authorities.

For more information, please contact Tammy Gilden, Senior Policy Associate at the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, at tgilden@thejcpa.org.

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Cosponsor the Partnership Fund for Peace Act

Widespread mistrust prevents Israelis and Palestinians from reaching a peace deal. Young people especially have lost hope. Though thousands of Israelis and Palestinians on the ground work together daily to bridge this “trust” gap by building cooperation among each other, they must scale up for change to be lasting. JCPA believes that with proper investment, a peaceful, two-state solution is truly possible; however, peace will not be established until there is a unified effort to change both the economic conditions in the region and communities’ attitudes toward one another.

The Partnership Fund for Peace would help accomplish this grassroots peace-building and create an environment in which diplomats can eventually achieve peace in the Middle East. The Fund would promote and support contact, cooperation, dialogue, shared community building, peaceful coexistence, joint economic development, and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. In addition, it would provide an expert presence on the ground that would take a strategic long-term approach to grassroots peace-building and leverage international donor support.

- **Cosponsor and support the bipartisan Partnership Fund for Peace Act (S. 1727/H.R. 3104), which would help preserve a two-state future by creating grassroots, people-to-people partnerships and joint opportunities for economic development among Israelis, Palestinians, and their American counterparts.** This legislation—supported by JCPA, The Jewish Federations of North America, Israel Action Network, AIPAC, J Street, AJC, Americans for Peace Now, Anti-Defamation League, Churches for Middle East Peace, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, and the Alliance for Middle East Peace—would establish a fund to allocate up to \$50 million a year to facilitate and finance joint ventures and people-to-people exchanges in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.
- **There is historical precedent for the creation of such a fund.** Following the Anglo-Irish agreement in 1986, the international community, led by the U.S. and the Commonwealth, came together to form the International Fund for Ireland, a multilateral fund that focused on building capacity, shared spaces, and reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. Between 1986 and 2010, the fund distributed over a billion dollars, which helped effectively reduce conflict and contribute to economic stability.
- **This bill is a necessary step to support shared society programs, which is critical to mitigating and ultimately resolving this conflict.** Like the International Fund for Ireland, the proposed fund would provide a stable source of funding at appropriate levels to support on-the-ground programs that promote cross-border and sectarian reconciliation and build a constituency that will reinforce an ultimate peace agreement.

For more information, please contact Darcy Hirsh, Director of Government Affairs at the Jewish Federations of North America, at Darcy.Hirsh@jewishfederations.org or Stephanie Hausner, Deputy Director at Israel Action Network, at Stephanie.Hausner@JewishFederations.org.



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NEVER AGAIN (HOLOCAUST) EDUCATION ACT OF 2019
Please Cosponsor S. 2085/H.R. 943

- There is a global increase in antisemitism not seen since World War II and not isolated to one state, or even one country. News from across the globe increasingly depicts Jewish cemetery desecrations, and antisemitic slurs, threats and attacks. Now we have experienced the recent tragedies at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh and at the Chabad synagogue in Poway, CA.
- The Never Again Education Act is one legislative vehicle that Congress can pass right now to help change this dynamic by exposing students to effective teaching about the Holocaust.
- Recent studies have found that the Holocaust is fading from public memory. A survey by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the “Claims Conference”) shows that two-thirds of millennials cannot identify what Auschwitz was, or name a single concentration camp. Over one-third of all Americans surveyed believe that fewer than two million Jews were killed during the Holocaust. Fifty-eight percent think something like the Holocaust could happen again.
- Unfortunately, teachers face many barriers to teaching the Holocaust including a lack of awareness of where to find resources, a lack of funding to take advantage of these resources, and a lack of knowledge on how to incorporate the subject into their curricula.
- The Never Again Education Act would establish a fund at the U.S. Department of Education to help teachers develop and improve Holocaust education programs. It authorizes \$2 million in federal appropriations for this project for each of the next five years and encourages the acceptance of donations in a classic public-private partnership.
- The Never Again Education Act would provide funding directly to teachers to develop individualized programs that best suit their students. It would cover such expenses as training for educators, textbooks, transportation and housing for teachers to attend seminars, transportation for survivors to be brought to a school, and field trips. It also would create a Holocaust education website as a central hub of resources and best practices for teachers interested in Holocaust education.
- The Never Again Education Act was introduced in the Senate on July 10, 2019 as S. 2085 by Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT). Companion legislation, H.R. 943, was introduced earlier this year in the House by Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY), and this strongly bipartisan House legislation has gained well over 200 co-sponsors. More than 300 national, state and local organizations from each of the 50 states support this program.

Please contact Stephan Kline, Associate Vice President for Public Policy for The Jewish Federations of North America, at Stephan.Kline@JewishFederations.org, with any questions.



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PASS THE TIME FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS ACT (S. 2179) NOW

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis and their collaborators murdered an estimated 6,000,000 European Jews, as well as millions of others. These victims were targeted because of their religious and political beliefs, national origin, disability, or other disfavored status. Millions more were confined to concentration or work camps or displaced from their homes and spent years as refugees.

Today, there are about 80,000 Holocaust survivors living in the United States, down from 127,000 who were alive in 2010. Every Holocaust survivor is now at least 74 years of age, but most are in their mid to late 80s, their 90s or beyond. Unconscionably, one-third of all Holocaust survivors live at or below the official poverty threshold including more than half of those who emigrated from the countries of the Former Soviet Union after experiencing the twin perils of Nazism and Stalinism.

Heart conditions, bone and feet issues, and dental problems are common for Holocaust survivors, as are depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders. Many are isolated from their communities, and endure the challenges of aging alone, often without family to care for them. Holocaust survivors have needs similar to those of other older Americans, but the consequences of their premature or unnecessary institutionalization can be much more severe. The sights, sounds, and smells of institutionalization, such as unfamiliar showers, confined spaces, or restrictions on food, can trigger traumatic psychological effects in Holocaust survivors.

Passage of the Trauma-Informed Modernization of Eldercare for Holocaust Survivors Act (the TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act) will ensure that Holocaust survivors living in the United State have access to the care and services that align with their needs. Specifically, the TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act:

- Creates a definition for “Holocaust survivor” in the Older Americans Act and includes Holocaust survivors as one of the designated groups that have the greatest social need within the Older Americans Act;
- Designates a new Administration for Community Living portfolio that focuses on Holocaust survivors, has responsibility for the provision of services to Holocaust survivors within ACL, and serves as a liaison on these issues with other relevant agencies of the federal government;
- Establishes a national resource center to share best practices, distribute grant funding, and promote person-centered trauma-informed care for local nonprofit agencies that serve all older adults experiencing the long-term and adverse consequences of trauma, including trauma resulting from the Holocaust;
- Ensures that providers of nutrition services can meet the special health-related nutrition needs or other dietary needs based on religious, cultural or ethnic requirements when there is sufficient demand in a community to warrant the provision of special meals; and

- Reports annually to Congress on the status and needs of Holocaust survivors and how the aging network is identifying and serving older adults experiencing the long-term and adverse consequences of trauma.

The TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act was introduced by Senators Cardin (D-MD), Cramer (R-ND), and Rosen (D-NV) on July 18, 2019 as S. 2179. Please cosponsor the TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act today.

Contact Stephan Kline, Associate Vice President for Public Policy for The Jewish Federations of North America, at Stephan.Kline@JewishFederations.org, with any questions about the Time for Holocaust Survivors Act.

Stay informed and connected by subscribing to our newsletter at
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