



Senate Finance Committee
Senator Matt Dolan, Chairman
Burt Logan, Executive Director & CEO
Ohio History Connection
Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 372
December 8, 2020

Chairman Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 372, which proposes to establish the Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission.

I start by thanking the sponsor, Senator Michael Rulli, for championing this bipartisan legislation. The Ohio History Connection, the state's nonprofit history partner, fully supports the creation of the Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission for many reasons. For one, the goals of SB 372 run parallel to the Ohio History Connection's own mission of embracing the present, sharing the past and transforming the future. This bill is clearly not just about reminding people of a shameful past but, if enacted, will also help all of us be alert to how hatred and disrespect can metastasize into human suffering on a monumental scale.

History is pretty clear about what can happen when religious and racial hatred are met with silence. You have already heard compelling evidence and stories of how antisemitism and hate crimes are on the rise today. You've also heard about the growing public ignorance of—and, very sadly, even the outright denial of—the Holocaust. These trends are alarming and should be of concern to every citizen. This Commission will educate the public about a terrible fact of our recent history: the Holocaust did happen and resulted in the deaths of six million Jewish people before and during WWII.

It is to Ohio's great credit that it dedicated the Ohio Holocaust and Liberators Memorial in 2014 on the Statehouse grounds. That was not an easy thing to accomplish and it seems appropriate now that the Ohio General Assembly rededicate itself to "the why" of this public monument and all that it represents. This Commission is one of many steps the State of Ohio can take—should take—to help ensure those lessons and values are never lost.

The Ohio History Connection looks forward to seeing this Commission up and running soon and to tie its own programming into the educational opportunities that will arise because of its work. We thank you for the opportunity to share with you our support of Senate Bill 372 and appreciate the work of Ohio Jewish Communities and others who have dedicated themselves to this important initiative. We stand with them in support. Thank you.

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