



Representatives Casey Weinstein and Juanita Brent

The Ohio House of Representatives

House State and Local Government Committee
December 6, 2022

HCR 29: Urge Congress to Designate the Kol Israel Holocaust Memorial as a National Memorial

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and the members of the House State and Local Government Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for House Concurrent Resolution 29. If passed, H.C.R. 29 would urge Congress to recognize the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial in Bedford Heights, OH, as a National Memorial. A companion resolution—S.C.R 11—was passed out of the Senate Government Budget Committee and unanimously adopted by the Senate this past spring.

The memorial is located in Zion Memorial Park and is believed to be the first memorial constructed in this country dedicated to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The Kol Israel Foundation was formed in 1959 by a small group of survivors. The Foundation built the memorial in 1961, consisting of a granite monument and low granite walls with the names of Jewish victims and departed Survivors engraved. Beneath the monument, ashes recovered from three concentration camps are buried, along with other artifacts. This memorial would be the first Holocaust-related monument designated as a National Historic Site or National Memorial.

We are living in a time when fewer and fewer Americans are learning about the horrors of the Holocaust. The findings from a [recent study](#) conducted by the Claims Conference on the knowledge and awareness of the Holocaust are shocking and disturbing. The survey found that 63% of Millennials and Gen Z did not know that 6 million Jewish people were killed during the Holocaust. When asked, over 30% of respondents thought the number of fatalities was around 2 million or less. Even more disturbingly, the survey found that 11% of Millennial and Gen Z respondents believe that Jewish people are at fault for the Holocaust.

These statistics show large numbers of misinformation and lack of education regarding the Holocaust in younger generations. This makes markers like the Kol Israel Memorial increasingly important. The monument serves as both a holy site and an educational location, signifying the historic events of World War II and providing a site for Survivors, their

descendants, and community members to learn, grieve, and offer prayers. Each year around the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, many attend a memorial service at the monument to honor the millions of victims that never received a proper burial. With hate crimes and antisemitism on the rise in Ohio and nationwide, these physical memorials to the Holocaust serve as a reminder that we must all work to fight hatred and bigotry in every form. We are proud that this resolution has received bipartisan support and that we are able to ask for the national recognition this marker deserves.