



Chairman Rulli, Vice Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the Ohio Senate General Government Committee, my name is Dayan Gross, Director of Development, at the Maltz Museum. I am here to urge your support for the Maltz Museum through an earmark in the Cultural Center Grants line item for enhanced Holocaust education programming.

The Maltz Museum is a vital institution in Northeast Ohio, where people of all backgrounds can learn about the history of bias and discrimination against Jews. Without adequate education about the past and confronting the rising levels of antisemitism, many believe that we will face a worsening resurgence of antisemitism. This is why research shows that Holocaust education is crucial to dispelling the fear, anxiety, and ultimate hatred of the Jews. Unfortunately, today, as the last Holocaust survivors pass away, we risk losing touch with the human-caused catastrophe that nearly wiped the Jewish people off the face of the Earth, increasing the risk of rampant antisemitism. As the need for Holocaust education continues to grow, I believe this project is crucial to promoting individual responsibility to create positive change in the community.

The U.S. Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey, conducted in 2020 by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, revealed a “shocking and saddening” lack of knowledge about the Holocaust among millennials and Gen Z. This lack of knowledge can make people vulnerable to the pervasive claims of Holocaust denial and antisemitism especially on social media, which has in part contributed to an increase in hate crimes against Jews. The Maltz Museum, through our most requested student tour, Themes of the Holocaust, paired with conversations with living survivors, has been instrumental in creating awareness about the Holocaust and inspiring people of all faiths and backgrounds to stand against hate.

The proposed project will update the approach and reach of the Museum’s Holocaust education programs. It will combine films, opportunities for response, hands-on activities for adults and children, and additional ways for visitors to connect history to their own life experiences. The elements of this project will work together to ensure long-term memory and understanding of the impact of the Holocaust.

The project will engage a scholar-educator to bring expertise to bear on the public programming, curatorial, and educational work of creating a first-class Holocaust education program at the Maltz Museum. The special Holocaust exhibition, *The Girl in the Diary: Searching for Rywka in the Lodz Ghetto*, will preserve the memory of a teenage Holocaust victim and her poignant story. Additionally, the earmark will help us develop a full slate of Holocaust programming to accompany the exhibition and oversee the development of a regional Holocaust education conference to bring together educators and stakeholders in Holocaust education to advance innovation in the field.

The project will also focus on personal interactions with a Holocaust survivor through the digital preservation of the Interactive Biography of Holocaust Survivor Stanley Bernath. The updated Holocaust curriculum will include artifact videos that focus on objects from the Museum's current collection and on loan from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the development of a Learning Guide to produce a learning strategy for integrating the Holocaust tour and other elements of the Museum's core collection into classroom history lessons and discussions.

The Maltz Museum's efforts to educate the public on the history of the Holocaust and the dangers of antisemitism are more important now than ever before. Between 2020 and 2021, antisemitic hate crimes increased by nearly 20 percent, according to the FBI, which also said that Jews accounted for the majority of religious-based hate crimes committed that year. The number of hate crimes targeting Jews was up 36 percent last year, an all-time high according to the Anti-Defamation League. By supporting the Maltz Museum's state funding request for FY24 and FY25, we can ensure that this important educational and anti-bias work continues and that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to stand against hate.

In addition to its educational programs, the Maltz Museum is also a valuable cultural resource for the community. Its exhibits and programs celebrate Jewish culture and history, and serve as a bridge between different communities and faiths. By supporting the Museum's funding request, we can ensure that it continues to be a vibrant and active part of the community for years to come.

It is worth noting that the Maltz Museum has a proven track record of success in educating the public on the Holocaust and related issues. Its exhibits and programs have reached hundreds of thousands of visitors, including many students who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to learn about this important history. By continuing to invest in the Museum's programs and exhibits, we can build on this success and ensure that its impact continues to grow.

To close, I would, again, humbly ask for your support so we can ensure that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to stand against antisemitism and other forms of hate and discrimination, and that the Museum continues to be a valuable resource for our community.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have and thank you for the opportunity to come before you today.