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NATIONAL SECRETARY



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Senator Matt Dolan, Finance Committee Chair, [Dolan@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:Dolan@ohiosenate.gov), [sd24@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:sd24@ohiosenate.gov)  
Senator David Burke, Finance Committee Vice Chair, [Burke@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:Burke@ohiosenate.gov), [sd26@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:sd26@ohiosenate.gov)  
Senator Vernon Sykes, Ranking Minority Member, [Sykes@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:Sykes@ohiosenate.gov), [sd28@ohiosenate.gov](mailto:sd28@ohiosenate.gov)

State of Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
Senate Building  
1 Capital Square, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Ohio SB 372/Holocaust Commission Bill

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Minority Member Sykes, and Members of the Finance Committee, thank you for taking the time to consider Hadassah's support of Senate Bill 327 to create a Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission.

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is the largest Jewish women's organization in the United States. With more than 300,000 members, associates, and supporters nationwide, we're proud of our organization's philanthropic spirit and passion for activism which is the foundation of our 100-plus year history. Our focus areas include protecting and advancing women's health, promoting the interests of Israel and Israel-U.S. relations, and bringing awareness to and combating antisemitism at home and abroad.

Particularly when it comes to combating antisemitism, we believe it is essential that every generation of students is properly educated about the tragedies of the Holocaust, so they are never repeated.

To that end, Hadassah is proud to have contributed to efforts to pass the Never Again Education Act in the 116th Congress, which helps ensure that educators have greater resources available to teach the substantial lessons of the Holocaust.

Continuing this mission, we're glad to support Senate Bill 372 – another important step forward to bringing essential awareness and education to young people about the lessons of the Holocaust and genocide. As Chairman Dolan has referenced as inspiration for this bill, a recent study highlighted the alarming lack of Holocaust education and awareness among Millennial and Gen Z individuals in Ohio (those aged 18-39). I share his concerns.

I believe Ohio should set the standard for the nation in educational excellence. But I fear that we have a long way to go. A comprehensive nationwide study of Holocaust knowledge and awareness among these populations found that Ohio ranks 32nd for Holocaust knowledge. And the statistics paint a stark picture of just how well Ohio has been performing in ensuring that the next generation of our state's leaders are taught critical information that helps to shape the world we live in, our values, and how Ohioans and Americans consider meeting challenges at home and abroad.

The study showed that 64% of respondents in Ohio did not know that six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, and 46% of respondents could not name a single camp or ghetto during World War II of the more than 40,000 that were established across Europe.

An astonishing 14% of respondents in Ohio say it is acceptable to hold neo-Nazi views, 12% say Jews caused the Holocaust and 59% say they have seen Nazi symbols in their community and/or on social media platforms in the last five years.

Without legislation like the Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission, we can expect the situation to darken further.

Holocaust education is a positive force for creating better communities, ultimately informing people about the dangers of racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination, about antisemitism today, and about hate and genocide. Through the Commission this bill establishes, we can help reverse course and cultivate knowledge and understanding that prepares Ohio's young men and women to recognize the threat and stand up against it.

Hadassah has always stood for the safety of Jewish Americans in the fight against rising antisemitism here at home. Working together to make our communities safer and stronger in the fight against hatred starts with education and building communities of informed people. This bill serves as a catalyst for that change, leading us one step closer to bridging the gap in understanding of the Holocaust and spreading its universal lessons to Ohio and beyond.

Thank you for your time and consideration of Hadassah's position on this important bill.

*Carol Ann Gershuny Schwartz*

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