

SENATOR KENNY YUKO
25th Senate District



SENATOR MATT DOLAN
24th Senate District

Sponsor Testimony
Senate Concurrent Resolution 11
General Government Budget Committee
Chair, Senator Bob Peterson
February 15, 2022

Good morning, Chair Peterson, Vice-Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee. Thank you for allowing myself and Senator Dolan to testify on behalf of Senate Concurrent Resolution 11, to urge Congress to designate the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial, located in Zion Memorial Park in Bedford, Ohio, as a National Memorial.

Located inside Zion Memorial Park, a not-for-profit Jewish cemetery, the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial was dedicated in 1961. The memorial was built to honor those who died in World War II, and to provide a grave for the 6 million Jews lost in the Holocaust who have no burial site. For the past 60 years, it has served as gathering place, sacred site, and reminder that we must not let history repeat itself. It is believed to be the very first Holocaust memorial constructed in the United States. For those who have not had the chance to visit the memorial, it is a striking experience. Standing nearly 17 feet tall, the granite monument contains ashes and artifacts of Jewish martyrs killed by the Nazis from three concentration camps. Engraved on surrounding walls are thousands of names of those who perished during the Holocaust, as well as the names of departed Survivors. Throughout the memorial are inscriptions, offering the opportunity to reflect on the horrors of the Holocaust, and recommit ourselves to the motto of the Jewish victims – “Never again.”

The Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial is also the site of an annual memorial service, held each year on the Sunday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The event serves as an opportunity for families to say the Mourner’s Kaddish for Holocaust victims, most of whom who did not receive a proper burial or do not have a known grave. The event also honors departed Survivors. An annual Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) Commemoration is held each spring. Both programs include a moving candle-lighting ceremony honoring Holocaust Survivors and liberators; the sharing of stories of destruction and liberation; remarks from religious and community leaders; psalms and songs; and special prayers for the departed.

The Kol Israel Foundation is working diligently to preserve and protect this important site for future generations. In 2017 the memorial was official recognized by the Ohio History Connection and a state historical marker was installed. We are here today in support of their

work to gain inclusion for the monument in the National Registry of Historic Places, and federal designation as a National Memorial. This requires an Act of the United States Congress. Once the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial receives this designation, it will open up new sources of support and funding for the site. We want to ensure that the memorial receives the designation it deserves, and is protected for years to come. There will come a time when no one is left to share their first person account of World War II and the Holocaust. The Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial will ensure that their stories are never forgotten.

Chair Peterson, Vice-Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention and consideration of this important issue. We would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.