

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1215

Calling on elected officials and civil society leaders to join in efforts to educate the public on the contributions of the Jewish American community.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 8, 2024

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (for herself, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Calling on elected officials and civil society leaders to join in efforts to educate the public on the contributions of the Jewish American community.

Whereas the United States is a melting pot of heritages and cultures;

Whereas Congress has honored this mosaic of people and unique contributions to our communities through commemorative months;

Whereas, by honoring each other's cultures, we can educate ourselves about the rich diversity that makes up the United States;

Whereas Jewish American Heritage Month has its origins in 1980, when Congress enacted a Joint Resolution entitled “Joint Resolution to authorize and request the President to issue a proclamation designating April 21 through April 28, 1980, as ‘Jewish Heritage Week’”, approved April 24, 1980 (Public Law 96–237; 94 Stat. 338);

Whereas, on April 24, 1980, President Carter issued the proclamation for Jewish Heritage Week, and in that proclamation, President Carter spoke about the bountiful contributions made by the Jewish people to the culture and history of the United States;

Whereas Congress has played a central role in recognizing Jewish American Heritage Month since the Senate and the House of Representatives passed resolutions in 2006 and 2005, respectively, urging the President to proclaim the national observation of a month recognizing the Jewish-American community;

Whereas, since 2006, Presidents Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden have all issued proclamations for Jewish American Heritage Month, which celebrates Jewish Americans and encourages all people of the United States to learn more about Jewish heritage and the contributions of Jewish people throughout the history of the United States;

Whereas Hamas’ heinous attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, resulted in the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust;

Whereas the Anti-Defamation League’s 2023 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents tabulated 8,873 antisemitic incidents across the United States, representing a 140-percent increase from the previous year and the highest

number on record since the Anti-Defamation League began tracking them in 1979;

Whereas, between October 7 and the end of 2023, the Anti-Defamation League tabulated 5,204 antisemitic incidents, more than the incident total for the whole of 2022;

Whereas the Anti-Defamation League recorded a 135-percent increase of incidents at K–12 schools, a 237-percent increase at Jewish institutions, and a 321-percent increase on college and university campuses compared to the same timeframe the previous year, with most occurring after October 7;

Whereas, according to American Jewish Committee, almost two-thirds of American Jews feel less secure in the United States than they did a year ago;

Whereas the National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism states that “increasing awareness and understanding of antisemitism must be coupled with a commitment to broadening appreciation of Jewish-American heritage. We must tell the positive story of Jewish contributions to the United States and the World”;

Whereas Jewish Americans have made significant contributions to the arts, entertainment, science and technology, military, government, business, culinary traditions, and other fields in the United States;

Whereas several prominent Jewish Americans heroically supported the American Revolution and Jewish community leaders advocated for freedom of religion for all Americans upon the founding of our Nation;

Whereas Jewish Americans have contributed to the advancement of science to save countless lives and transform our understanding of the universe, including Vera Rubin, a

trailblazer in the field of astronomy whose work established the existence of dark matter; Lillian D. Wald, a nurse who fought for public health care, women's rights, and children's rights and founded the Henry Street Settlement; Jonas Salk, a virologist who developed a vaccine against polio; and Albert Einstein who was named Time magazine's "Person of the Century" for his contributions to the study of mathematics and physics;

Whereas Jewish-American athletes excelled at sports while staying true to their heritage such as Sandy Koufax, who was the first major league pitcher to pitch four no-hitters and chose not to pitch during a World Series game when it fell on Yom Kippur, and Hank Greenberg, who was the first Jewish inductee in the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1954;

Whereas Jewish-American women have made significant contributions to American politics and activism, including Ernestine Rose, a Jewish immigrant who raised her voice to resist slavery and fight for women's suffrage and Florence Prag Kahn, the first Jewish woman Member of Congress and first woman to serve on the House Military Affairs Committee;

Whereas Jewish Americans long advocated for the education of all including Julius Rosenwald, who partnered with Booker T. Washington to invest in the education of Black students and built thousands of schools for Black students in 15 States in the South;

Whereas the Jewish community has long been involved in the civil rights movement;

Whereas Henry Moskowitz joined with civil rights activists such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells to found the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909;

Whereas Jack Greenberg argued against segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education* as co-counsel to Thurgood Marshall and succeeded Marshall as Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund;

Whereas, during the Freedom Summer of 1964, half of the young people who went to Mississippi were Jewish, including Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, who were murdered along with African-American activist James Chaney due to their efforts to register Black voters;

Whereas Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel served as a close ally and advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., marching with him from Montgomery to Selma in 1964;

Whereas, in 1964, 17 rabbis were arrested alongside Dr. King in Florida after challenging racial segregation in public accommodations; and

Whereas to counter the rise of antisemitism, it is critical to increase awareness of Jewish-American contributions, dating back to the founding of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls on elected officials, faith leaders, and
3 civil society leaders to condemn and counter all acts
4 of antisemitism;

5 (2) calls on the executive branch and State and
6 local leaders to educate the public on the contribu-

1 tions of the Jewish-American community and uplift
2 Jewish voices;

3 (3) take all possible steps to ensure the safety
4 and security of Jewish-American communities, in-
5 cluding by investing in the Nonprofit Security Grant
6 Program and preventing terrorism and hate crimes;
7 and

8 (4) calls on educators and administrators to
9 combat hate in academic settings.

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