



For Immediate Release

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Cardin Leads Effort to Increase Funding for Holocaust Survivor Assistance Fund

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), a member of the **Senate Finance Committee**, is urging Senate appropriators to increase assistance to the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** so that the federal government can better support American Holocaust Survivors and their families. In a letter addressed to Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman, **Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)** and Ranking Member **Patty Murray (D-Wash.)**, Cardin and five other Senators called for the inclusion of \$5 million in the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill to fund the **Holocaust Survivor Assistance Fund** under Aging Network Support Activities.

“After surviving the terror of the Nazi’s in Europe, hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors decided to start anew in America. Those men and women have contributed greatly to their new American communities and this country as a whole,” said **Senator Cardin**, author of the [Responding to Urgent Needs of Survivors of the Holocaust Act](#). “America owes it to the Survivors among us to ensure that they can age with dignity and without the fear of institutionalization. Nothing can take back the brutalization they suffered all those years ago, but Congress has the power to ensure to make certain they can live their remaining years in comfort.”

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, there are approximately 130,000 Holocaust Survivors living in the United States today – with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty. As a group, Holocaust Survivors are at increased risk of depression, social isolation, and extremely poor outcomes associated with institutionalization, which can be emotionally and physically devastating for Survivors as a trigger of the traumas of forced institutionalizations and relocations during the Holocaust. The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Fund leverages public-private partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector to meet the needs of aging Survivors. Notably the fund is used to find alternatives to the institutionalization that can be harmful to Survivors.

“The Jewish Federations of North America is deeply appreciative of the support for Holocaust survivors in the U.S. Senate,” said **Mark Wilf, chair of the Jewish Federations’ Holocaust Survivor Initiative**. “In leading this letter, Senator Cardin recognizes the vital needs of Holocaust survivors to age in place with dignity and comfort in their homes and communities.”

“The Association of Jewish Family & Children’s Agencies applauds Senator Cardin and all who have signed this letter for recognizing Holocaust survivors, the invaluable lessons they have taught humanity, and the unique issues they face as they age and become more frail,” **said James Kahn, board chair of the Association of Jewish Family & Children’s Agencies.**

In addition to Cardin, the letter is signed by **Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Chuck Schumer (Both D-N.Y.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), and Bill Nelson (D-Fla.).**

The full text of the letter follows and can be [downloaded here](#).

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for including \$5 million in funding for the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Fund under Aging Network Support Activities at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This is in addition to the \$2.5 million requested by the Administration for Community Living. This is a timely and necessary program that responds to an immediate bipartisan public policy priority, and would use public dollars to leverage private support.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, there are approximately 130,000 Holocaust Survivors living in the United States today – with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty. After witnessing the darkest period of the last century and the resiliency of the human spirit, Survivors built a new life in the United States, raised families, and enriched our country. Now they are aging and becoming increasingly frail. Their average age is 82, but nearly one-quarter are age 85 or older. As a group, Holocaust Survivors are at increased risk of depression, social isolation, and extremely poor outcomes associated with institutionalization, which can be emotionally and physically devastating for Survivors as a trigger of the traumas of forced institutionalizations and relocations during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Fund leverages public-private partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and private sectors to address the urgent needs of the Survivor population and the nonprofit organizations that support them. Leveraged with philanthropic dollars, the fund would be administered

through Section 411 of the Older Americans Act, with input from the Special Envoy for U.S. Holocaust Survivor Services, to provide an array of supportive services necessary to age in place. Without immediate action on behalf of these Survivors, we risk losing them to the very things they should never have to face again - eviction, hunger, inadequate medical care, loneliness, social isolation, and despair. It is the goal of this unique private-public partnership to ensure that no Survivor is ever put in that position.

While we understand the fiscal constraints under which you are working, we urge you to prioritize this innovative initiative to support Survivors in Fiscal Year 2016. We look forward to working together to ensure that Holocaust survivors are able to live in dignity, comfort, and security in their homes and communities for the remainder of their lives.

Sincerely,

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