

# Support Aging Holocaust Survivors

**Help Aging Holocaust Survivors Live with Dignity and Security  
L-HHS Appropriations  
Support the Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program Request  
Deadline: March 18, 2016**

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in requesting \$5 million in FY 2017 for the Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program through the Administration for Community Living. Currently, the Department of Health and Human Services has requested \$2.5 million. This program will help ensure that Holocaust survivors are able to live in dignity, comfort, and security in their homes and communities for the remainder of their lives.

Approximately 113,000 Holocaust Survivors live in the United States today – with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty; their average age is 82, with nearly one-quarter over 85. After witnessing and surviving 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.

As a group, Holocaust survivors are at increased risk of depression, social isolation, and extremely poor outcomes associated with nursing home admissions. Survivors learned long ago to fear and mistrust doctors, white coats, or uniforms because of their terrifying experiences with Nazi soldiers and medical experiments. Unfamiliar showers are particularly traumatic to Survivors of concentration camps because of the gas chambers disguised as showers. Even socially adjusted Survivors who have adapted well their entire lives in America may experience these triggers later in life, especially if compounded by dementia or Alzheimer's.

The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program, which was first created in the FY15 budget and continued in the FY16 budget, leverages public-private partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector to address the unique needs of the survivor population. The program administered through the Administration on Aging, is dedicated to expanding the capacity of community-based agencies to provide direct services to Holocaust survivors in a person-centered, trauma-informed manner; and to developing and implementing a national technical assistance center devoted to expanding the aging services network's capacity to deliver person-centered, trauma-informed services.

Through this Program, we can help to prevent the very things survivors should never have to face again - eviction, hunger, inadequate medical care, loneliness, social isolation, and despair. If you would like to cosign the letter, please contact Sarah Arkin with Representative Wasserman Schultz at [sarah.arkin@mail.house.gov](mailto:sarah.arkin@mail.house.gov) or 5-7931 or Eddy Acevedo with Representative Ros-Lehtinen [eddy.acevedo@mail.house.gov](mailto:eddy.acevedo@mail.house.gov) (5-5021) by March 18, 2016.

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress

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March 24, 2016

Tom Cole, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2017 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 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, and equal to our FY '16 request. 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 as well.

There are approximately 113,000 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. 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 Program leverages public-private partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector to address the urgent needs of the survivor population and the nonprofit organizations that support them. Leveraged with philanthropic dollars and administered through the Administration on Aging, the program is dedicated to expanding the capacity of community-based agencies to provide direct services to Holocaust survivors in a person-centered, trauma-informed manner; and to developing and implementing a national technical assistance center devoted to expanding the aging services network's capacity to deliver person-centered, trauma-informed services.

Through the immediate support for the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program, we can help to prevent the very things they should never have to face again - eviction, hunger, inadequate medical care, loneliness, social isolation, and despair. 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 2017. 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,