

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 203

Recognizing the significance of Jewish American Heritage Month as a time to celebrate the contributions of Jewish Americans to the society and culture of the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 9, 2023

Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the significance of Jewish American Heritage Month as a time to celebrate the contributions of Jewish Americans to the society and culture of the United States.

Whereas the Senate and the House of Representatives have recognized many heritage months that celebrate the various communities that form the mosaic of the United States;

Whereas, through recognizing and celebrating heritage months, we learn about one another, honor the richness of the diversity of the United States, and strengthen the fabric of society in 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 people of the United States celebrate the rich history of Jewish people in the United States and the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to society in the United States;

Whereas the United States has long served as a haven for Jewish people escaping from oppression in search of liberty, justice, and tolerance;

Whereas the Jewish American community dates back to 1654, when a group of 23 Jewish people, fleeing persecution at the hands of the Portuguese Inquisition, fled Brazil and found refuge in what is now New York City;

Whereas Jewish Americans have established deep roots in communities across the United States, and served their neighbors and the United States as loyal and patriotic citizens, always grateful for the safe harbor that the United States has provided for them;

Whereas the Jewish American community has since grown to over 6,000,000 people, representing approximately 2 percent of the population of the United States in 2023;

Whereas Jewish Americans have served in government and the military, won Nobel prizes, led universities and corporations, advanced medicine and philanthropy, created and performed in enduring works of performing and visual art, written great novels, become emblems of justice as members of the Supreme Court of the United States, and so much more;

Whereas Jewish Americans have been subjected to a recent surge in antisemitism as the Anti-Defamation League's 2022 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents tracked 3,697 antisemitic incidents in the United States, representing a 36 percent increase from 2021 and the largest number on record since the Anti-Defamation League began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979;

Whereas the rise in antisemitism is being felt by ordinary people in the United States, as a report by the American Jewish Committee revealed that—

(1) 89 percent of Jewish respondents believe antisemitism is a problem in the United States; and

(2) 4 in 10 Jewish Americans reported changing their behavior in at least 1 way out of fear of anti-semitism;

Whereas, over the course of the past decade, Holocaust distortion and denial have grown in intensity;

Whereas a 2020 survey of all 50 States on Holocaust knowledge among Millennials and Generation Z, conducted by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, found a clear lack of awareness of key historical facts, including—

(1) 63 percent of respondents did not know that 6,000,000 Jews were murdered during the Holocaust; and

(2) 36 percent of respondents thought that “two million or fewer Jews” were killed;

Whereas the Federal Bureau of Investigation has aggregated 2021 hate crime data showing that Jewish people remain the single most targeted religious minority in the United States;

Whereas the use of antisemitic language, conspiracy theories, and hatred has increased on multiple social media platforms, including—

(1) tropes about Jewish control; and

(2) messages praising Adolf Hitler and demonizing all Jewish people;

Whereas the most effective ways to counter the increase in antisemitic actions are through education, awareness, and the uplifting of Jewish voices, while highlighting the contributions that Jewish Americans have made to the United States; and

Whereas, as the strength of a society can be measured by how that society protects its minority populations and celebrates their contributions, it is altogether fitting for the United States to once again mark the month of May as Jewish American Heritage Month: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes the significance of Jewish Amer-
3 ican Heritage Month as a time to celebrate the con-
4 tributions of Jewish Americans to the society and
5 culture of the United States;

6 (2) recognizes that Jewish American culture
7 and heritage strengthen and enrich the diversity of
8 the United States; and

9 (3) calls on elected officials, faith leaders, and
10 civil society leaders to condemn and combat any and
11 all acts of antisemitism.

○