

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
H-204, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

November 27, 2018

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi:

We, the undersigned organizations, strongly encourage you to do everything in your power to pass into law two important pieces of legislation on combating anti-Semitism abroad before the end of this session of Congress: the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act ([S. 1292/H.R. 1911](#)) and the Combating European Anti-Semitism Act ([S. 198/H.R. 672](#)). We believe both of these bills are important for ensuring American leadership in the global fight against anti-Semitism, and we believe action on these bills before Congress ends its session would send an important message that America will not remain silent as international Jewish communities are threatened.

The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act was first referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June 2017, and it was approved by the House this September by an overwhelming vote of 393 to 2. The Combating European Anti-Semitism Act was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January 2017 and was approved unanimously by the House a year and a half ago. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has yet to take action on either of these bills during that span of time, even after a letter was sent to the Committee this July urging timely action on both bills from fifteen Jewish communal organizations and Human Rights First.

The simplest way forward would be for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to discharge these bills without delay and for the Senate to then hold a timely vote on each bill. We also would enthusiastically support efforts to find other vehicles to pass these common-sense bills, including attaching them to key funding bills that must be passed before the end of the year.

The United States has been without a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism since January 2017, even though this State Department position is mandated by law. Meanwhile, anti-Semitic assaults [increased](#) in the U.K. in 2017 by 34% according to

the Community Security Trust. In France, violent anti-Semitic acts [increased](#) by 28% in 2017 according to the French Interior Ministry. Anti-Semitic vandalism [increased](#) by 40% in the Netherlands in 2017 according to CIDI, the Dutch anti-Semitism monitoring organization. Additionally, in 2018 a broad swath of leaders from the Jewish communities in both [Poland](#) and [Ukraine](#) issued open letters decrying a rise in anti-Semitic speech or incidents in those countries as well.

The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act emphasizes the urgency of filling this special envoy position in a timely manner and lays out absolute minimum qualifications for the job. It would also boost the envoy's chances of success by ensuring that he or she reports directly to the Secretary of State, by elevating the position to the rank of ambassador, and by authorizing the envoy to coordinate efforts across the entire U.S. government with regard to anti-Semitism in foreign countries.

We would also encourage you to ensure that any final version of this bill include the amendment adopted in the House that would set a limit on the time that this position is theoretically permitted to remain vacant, stating that “not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 120 after any such position becomes vacant, the President shall nominate the Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating anti-Semitism under section 59 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, as amended by subsection (a) of this section.”

The Combating European Anti-Semitism Act also makes a worthwhile contribution to this effort. It declares that it is in the U.S. interest to combat anti-Semitism at home and abroad, that there is a need to ensure the security of European Jewish communities, and that the U.S. should continue to emphasize in multilateral bodies the importance of combating anti-Semitism.

This bill also amends the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to require the State Department's annual report on International Religious Freedom to include, for each relevant European country, a description of the security needs of European Jewish communities, efforts by European governments to adopt and apply a working definition of anti-Semitism, educational efforts to mitigate anti-Semitic animus, and U.S. efforts to share information and best practices with local institutions to combat anti-Semitic incidents in Europe.

As this bill states, “anti-Semitism is a challenge to the basic principles of tolerance, pluralism, and democracy, and the shared values that bind Americans and Europeans together.” We look to our leaders in Congress to take action during these critical times, helping to ensure American leadership in the world and the protection of threatened Jewish communities abroad.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

ADL (Anti-Defamation League)

Agudath Israel of America

Ameinu

American Jewish Committee

American Zionist Movement

Aytzim: Ecological Judaism

B'nai B'rith International

Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.

HIAS

Human Rights First

J Street

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

The Jewish Federations of North America

The Jewish Labor Committee

JWI (Jewish Women International)

National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry (NCSEJ)

National Council of Jewish Women

Rabbinical Assembly

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

The Simon Wiesenthal Center

Union for Reform Judaism

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America

Uri L'Tzedek: The Orthodox Social Justice Movement

Workmen's Circle

Local Organizations:

Baltimore Jewish Council

Baltimore Zionist District

Cincinnati JCRC

Community Relations Council of the Columbia Jewish Federation

Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council

Mid-Kansas Jewish Federation

JCRC Atlanta

The JCRC of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte

The JCRC of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland

Jewish Community Relations Council / AJC – Detroit

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Santa Barbara

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington

Jewish Community Relations Council of Louisville

Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas

Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County

Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties

Jewish Community Relations Council of Southern New Jersey

Jewish Community Relations Council of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation

Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation

Jewish Community Relations Council of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater

Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee

Jewish Federation of Broward County

Jewish Federation of Cleveland

Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne

Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta

Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga

Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines

Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles

Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans

Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City

Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh

Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester

Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara

Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle

Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago

Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley

Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey

Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley

Knoxville Jewish Alliance

Memphis Jewish Federation

North Louisiana Jewish Federation

Ohio Jewish Communities

Savannah Jewish Federation and Jewish Educational Alliance

UJA Federation NY