

## Youngkin unveils effort to fight antisemitism

**DAVE RESS**

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**R**ising antisemitism has promoted Gov. Glenn Youngkin to propose a \$2 million boost to Virginia's hate crime security grant program in the next state budget.

The money would boost the fund to \$5 million, while new language in Youngkin's proposed two-year budget would allow at-risk community nonprofits to apply for the funds directly instead of through local governments.

Doing this would allow Jewish community institutions to apply for enhanced security measures, the governor's office said.

Youngkin announced the increase, along with a \$375,000 grant to the Virginia Holocaust Museum, at a menorah lighting at the Weinstein Jewish Community Center on Monday evening.

"At a time of rising antisemitism and disturbing displays on our college campuses, it is more important than ever to support community outreach initiatives, provide learning opportunities for our students about the horrors of antisemitism, and enable security enhancement opportunities for our Jewish communities," Youngkin said.

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The funds for Virginia Holocaust Museum investment will support the Alexander Lebenstein Teacher Education Institute program, which organizes learning experiences, educational content and exhibitions for students to learn about the Holocaust and other genocides, as well as the museum's "Speaker's Bureau," which offers students the chance to hear firsthand accounts from Holocaust survivors.

"When Jews represent just 2% of the population, yet more than 60% of faith-based hate crimes, moral leadership requires exactly this type of major investment," said Rabbi Dovid Asher of Keneseth Beth Israel. "These wise investments will positively impact our state for generations to come."

In October, in response to reports that street protesters in Richmond were calling for the extermination of the Jewish community in Israel and that students at the College of William & Mary suffered verbal abuse for expressing their faith, Youngkin directed state public safety officials to set up a situation room to coordinate and enhance efforts to protect houses of worship and institutions for people who might be targeted because of their ethnic identity.

His directive also asked state colleges and universities to submit updated safety plans aimed at protecting students, including Jewish and Muslim students. Youngkin also asked the Superintendent of Public Instruction to make sure public K-12 schools have access to resources to protect students from hate crimes.

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