

# Support Holocaust Survivors in the FY19 Labor-HHS Bill

Sending Office: Honorable Debbie Wasserman  
Schultz  
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**Deadline: COB Wednesday, March 14**

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Dear Colleague:

Please join us in sending the letter below to Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro, requesting \$5 million in FY 2019 for the Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program through the Administration for Community Living. This program will help ensure that Holocaust survivors are able to live in dignity in their homes and communities, and foster the development of replicable models of care to serve other aging victims of trauma, such as veterans, refugees, and first responders.

Approximately 100,000 Holocaust survivors live in the United States today – with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty and with many 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 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 FY 2015 budget and continued in the FY 2016 and FY 2017 budgets, 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 for Community Living, partners with The Jewish Federations of North America's Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care. The Center 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 cost-effective 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 **[fill out this form](#)**. If you have any questions, please contact Kaitlyn Lane with Representative Wasserman Schultz at [kaitlyn.lane@mail.house.gov](mailto:kaitlyn.lane@mail.house.gov) or Gabrielle Boffelli with Representative Ros-Lehtinen at [Gabriella.Boffelli@mail.house.gov](mailto:Gabriella.Boffelli@mail.house.gov) **by COB Wednesday, March 14.**

March XX, 2018

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2019 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 a timely and necessary program that responds to an immediate bipartisan public policy priority, and uses public dollars to leverage private support as well. There are approximately 100,000 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. Many 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 established a Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care (Center), which 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 and family caregivers that support them. Thus far a total of 42 organizations in 18 states supporting 55 programs in 34 communities have been funded through the Center. Each community-based organization (sub-grantee) is funded for two years. All sub-grantees are required to contribute matching resources equal to approximately 40% of the total program budget.

- In the Center's inaugural year (in FY 2015), person-centered, trauma-informed (PCTI) innovations led to decreased loneliness and depression; reduced caregiver stress; increased feelings of safety, security, and social support; improved feelings of independence and ability to age at home; and a better understanding of triggers and behaviors linked to trauma among professionals and families participating in PCTI trainings. In the first two years of service delivery the program has impacted approximately 16,400 individuals, including approximately:
- 11,000 Holocaust Survivors, who have received direct services;
- 4,000 service providers, who have been trained in providing PCTI Care to Holocaust Survivors; and
- 1,400 caregivers for Holocaust Survivors (non-professional, often family members), who have been trained in providing PCTI care or received services.

Through the immediate support for the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program, we can help to prevent the very issues Holocaust survivors should never have to face again — eviction, hunger, inadequate medical care, loneliness, social isolation, and despair. Moreover, the programs and practices developed through this initiative will have broader applications for the aging services network to respond to other traumatized populations. While we understand the fiscal constraints under which you are working, we urge you to prioritize this cost-effective innovative initiative to support Holocaust survivors in Fiscal Year 2019. 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,

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Member of Congress