

SIMON WIESENTHAL HOLOCAUST
EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Education Assistance Act, which I recently introduced. This important legislation would provide competitive grants for educational organizations to make Holocaust education more accessible and available throughout the Nation.

Last Tuesday, people from all corners of the Earth, representing all faiths stood together to solemnly commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day, in memorial of perhaps the greatest crime ever perpetrated against humanity. As we reflect upon the tragedies of the events surrounding the Holocaust—the lives lost, the families destroyed, the potential unfulfilled—we must renew our commitment to never forget, so this dark chapter in history will never be repeated.

We must never forget the approximately six million Jewish men, women and children, as well as the millions of others who faced persecution, displacement, and death at the hands of the Nazis. We must remember their stories not just to honor their lives, but more importantly, to educate the next generation about the dangers of intolerance, ignorance, and bigotry.

Some may question the necessity of studying an event that—while horrific—happened over half a century ago and an ocean away. Other skeptics will argue that anti-Semitism—while terrible—is a relic of the past that simply doesn't exist in modern society. Unfortunately, we ignore history at our peril, and not recognizing and taking seriously the seeds of bigotry and anti-Semitism that have again begun to take root around the world only serves to promulgate it.

Recently, anti-Semitism has surfaced disguised in the form of anti-Israel rhetoric. The two have morphed into a virulent attack against all Jews resulting in a provocative and dangerous escalation of physical attacks against Jewish individuals, synagogues and other Jewish institutions around the world. Symbols of Nazi Germany have been used in this form of anti-Semitism as a cudgel against Jews, insulting the honor of millions of Jewish people—a people still emerging from the dark shadow cast by the Holocaust. Some have sought to rewrite history to minimize and spin the facts surrounding the Holocaust. The leadership of Iran has waged campaigns not just to alter, but to simply erase an inconvenient history. Holocaust deniers—authors and others who have the bully pulpit have smeared the truth of history—something that is regrettably so much easier to do as the Holocaust recedes in time and as those who can bear witness are dwindling in numbers.

Unfortunately, we need not look half way around the globe for examples of anti-Semitism, intolerance and hate; but rather we can look to our own neighborhoods and communities. In

Fort Lauderdale earlier this year at an anti-Israel rally, a demonstrator was heard to say “Go back to the oven. You need a big oven,” a horrific reference to the crematoria of Nazi Germany. And it saddens me to note that in my home State of New Jersey, a State of immense diversity, tolerance and understanding, we have seen a number of recent troubling anti-Semitic incidents that tear away at the decency and civility that we should expect in this great Nation.

Last December, three Glen Rock teenagers were charged with painting a swastika and the word “Jew” on the property of Jewish residents.

This past January, a Kenilworth family awoke one morning to find a Star of David and the word “Die” carved into their garage door.

Last month, Northvale public school students had to endure anti-Semitic graffiti scrawled throughout the walls of their school.

A New Jersey family made national headlines by naming their three young children Aryan Nation, Hinler, and Adolf Hitler.

As recently as last week, in Union City, where I grew up, authorities were investigating an act of arson in a classroom of a Jewish school that is being reported as a hate crime.

These troubling events do not occur in a vacuum. They are a reflection of an ever-present current of hate. We cannot sit idly and hope that time alone will heal the wounds of genocide or solve our issues of continued intolerance. We must take proactive steps to ensure that our society remembers and learns from the painful experiences of the Holocaust. Holocaust education is essential to the enlightenment, understanding, and empathy of our youngest generations and their role in history to come.

The Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Education Act is an important step toward this goal. While some States, like New Jersey, currently require the Holocaust to be taught in public schools, this act goes further and makes grants available to organizations that instruct students, teachers, and communities about the dangers of hate and the importance of tolerance in our society. This legislation would give educators the appropriate resources and training to teach accurate historical information about the Holocaust and convey the lessons that the Holocaust can teach us today. I certainly cannot think of a better namesake for this bill, for Simon Wiesenthal honored the memories of those lost by dedicating his life to bringing those responsible for these horrific acts to justice.

Only by proper acknowledgement of the incredible loss of life during the Holocaust, will we ever be able to ensure that such an event never happens again.

It is in our common interest to raise our voices against anti-Semitism and against all hatred and discrimination. Funding accurate Holocaust edu-

cational programs is a step toward winning this battle.

So as America stands with Israel and all followers of the Jewish faith in condemning anti-Semitism, let us do everything in our power to end discrimination and educate future generations about the danger of hatred and bigotry.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

NATIONAL AMERICAN CITY
QUALITY MONTH

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today to recognize April as the 21st Annual National American City Quality Month. Led by the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the American City Planning Directors' Council/American City Quality Foundation, this valuable program brings together a wide range of public and private partners. Their efforts demonstrate what it takes to build great communities, addressing vital issues to include land use, building design, transportation, parks and recreation, energy efficiency, and environmental protection.

City planners across my State of Maine and throughout the Nation are calling on public and private sector leaders to commit to efforts that will lead to better planning, redevelopment and development of our Nation's cities and surrounding regions. This is essential to accommodate U.S. Census projected population growth of 34.5 million by the year 2020 and 100 million within 20 to 30 years.

This public-private partnership is necessary to meet the growing need for higher quality, more energy efficient and sustainable housing, buildings, public transportation, infrastructure, agriculture, and industry. I applaud these collaborative efforts to improve urban and rural communities across our Nation.

This collaborative planning works. Just a few weeks ago, *Forbes* magazine named Portland, ME, my State's largest city, as the most livable city in America. In addition, Portland's busy Commercial Street was voted as one of the country's great streets by the American Planning Association. The transformation of Portland did not happen by accident. It is the result of citizens and organizations working together. And American City Quality Month celebrates this effort.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM TOBIN

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I wish to honor a pioneer of Alaska journalism who did much during his 62-year career to make his adopted State of Alaska what it is today. William J. “Bill” Tobin died earlier this month at age 81, following a year-long battle with cancer.

Bill served 2 years in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1943 to 1945. He started his journalism career in 1948 working for the Associated Press in Indianapolis, IN, while still in college at