



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## Legislation Text

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**File #: 060769, Version: 0**

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Commemorating the 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kristallnacht and recognizing the artistic contributions of Gottfried Helnwein in keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive.

WHEREAS, On the nights of November 9 and 10, 1938 gangs of Nazi youth roamed through Jewish neighborhoods throughout Germany and parts of Austria breaking windows of Jewish businesses and homes, burning synagogues and looting. In all 101 synagogues were destroyed and almost 7,500 Jewish businesses were destroyed. 26,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps, Jews were physically attacked and beaten and 91 Jews died; and

WHEREAS, On November 12, Hermann Goering, President of the Reichstag and Hitler's second in command called a meeting of the top Nazi leadership to assess the damage done during the night and place responsibility for it. The intent of this meeting was two-fold: to make the Jews responsible for Kristallnacht and to use the events of the preceding days as a rationale for promulgating a series of anti-Semitic laws which would, in effect, remove Jews from the German economy; and

WHEREAS, This event became known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass. Synagogues were especially targeted for vandalism, including desecration of sacred Torah scrolls. Hundreds of synagogues were systematically burned while local fire departments stood by or simply prevented the fire from spreading to surrounding buildings; and

WHEREAS, This massive and coordinated attack triggered what was to become known as the Holocaust, a state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators. Jews were the primary victims-6 million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny; and

WHEREAS, Renowned Austrian-born artist, Gottfried Helnwein has committed himself and his art to reminding the world of the Holocaust. His exhibit, *Ninth November Night*, consists of 17 children's portraits displayed in commemoration of Kristallnacht. *Ninth November Night* was originally displayed in 1988 in Cologne, Germany. Days into the exhibit, the paintings were vandalized by neo-Nazis. This exhibit will have its American premiere in Philadelphia in Spring, 2007; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kristallnacht be commemorated, and that Gottfried Helnwein be honored for his artistic contributions.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Mr. Helnwein and to the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia as evidence of this legislative body's sincere appreciation of their efforts to ensuring that the world never forgets the horrors of the Holocaust.