

Legislation Text

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In solemn recognition of the Week of April 15 through April 22, 2018 as the National Annual Remembrance of the Six Million Jewish Martyrs, who perished during the Holocaust.

WHEREAS, Over seventy years ago, six million Jews were murdered in the Nazi Holocaust as part of a systematic program of genocide, and millions of other people suffered as victims of Nazism; and

WHEREAS, The people of the City of Philadelphia should continually rededicate themselves to the principle of equal justice for all people; and

WHEREAS, The people of the City of Philadelphia should remain eternally vigilant against all tyranny, and recognize that bigotry provides a breeding ground for tyranny to flourish; and

WHEREAS, This year is the 75th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. This was the 1943 act of Jewish resistance that arose within the Warsaw Ghetto in German-occupied Poland during World War II, and which opposed Nazi Germany's final effort to transport the remaining Ghetto population to Treblinka. The uprising started on April 19th when the Ghetto refused to surrender to the police commander who then ordered the burning of the Ghetto, block by block, ending on May 16th. A total of 13,000 Jews died, about half of them burnt alive or suffocated. It was the largest single revolt by Jews during World War II; and

WHEREAS, During the Nazi period everyone had to make moral choices. Some people became perpetrators, others were bystanders. A small and brave minority chose to help the persecuted - these are the rescuers and helpers. This was an extraordinary selfless choice. It meant risking not only their own lives but the lives of their own family and children. Many paid with their lives. Although none succeeded in halting the Holocaust, many people survived as a result of their efforts. Each chose to defy the power of the Nazis and their collaborators. They showed the power of the individual and provided hope in otherwise hopeless circumstances by demonstrating the importance of moral courage in action; and

WHEREAS, The Memorial Committee for the Six Million Jewish Martyrs has chosen as the theme for this year's Memorial, "Rescuers Among Us." Given the alarming growth in the number of anti-Semitic threats since the beginning of 2017, desecration of Jewish cemeteries, and the bomb threats to Jewish Community Centers and schools across the country, it is clear that we cannot be complacent in the face of anti-Semitism or any other forms of bigotry and hatred. The ceremony will emphasize the need for people taking action to help others and will feature poems, readings and music that speak to the theme. We applaud the Committee for the honor they will bestow on the memory of those who perished and on those who survived to build and strengthen life in Philadelphia and other communities; and

WHEREAS, Both the Talmud and the Koran remind us: 'whoever saves a life, it is as if he saved the world entire'; and

WHEREAS, The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and the Memorial Committee for the Six Million

Jewish Martyrs will honor the memory of the six million martyrs and honor the survivors on April 15, 2018; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes the week of April 15 through April 22, 2018 as the National Annual Remembrance of the Six Million Jewish Martyrs, who perished during the Holocaust. We further recognize the horror of the Holocaust, and extend to the Memorial Committee the respect and admiration of this legislative body.