

Senator Bob Corker
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
425 Dirksen Senate Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Robert Menendez
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
528 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 19, 2018

Dear Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Menendez:

We, the undersigned organizations, strongly encourage you to approve two important pieces of legislation on combating anti-Semitism abroad that are currently before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act ([S. 1292](#)) and the Combating European Anti-Semitism Act ([S. 198](#)). We believe both of these bills are important for ensuring American leadership in the fight against anti-Semitism, and we believe action by your Committee would send an important message that America will not remain silent as Jewish communities come under threat.

The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee over a year ago, and it was approved unanimously by the House Foreign Affairs Committee this May. The Combating European Anti-Semitism Act was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January 2017 and was passed unanimously by the full House of Representatives over a year ago. We appreciate the fact that Ranking Member Menendez has cosponsored both of these important bills.

The United States has been without a Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism since January 2017, even though this State Department position is mandated by law. Meanwhile, anti-Semitic assaults [increased](#) in the U.K. by 34% according to the Community Security Trust. In France, violent anti-Semitic acts [increased](#) by 28% in 2017 according to the French Interior Ministry. Anti-Semitic vandalism [increased](#) by 40% in the Netherlands in 2017 according to CIDI, the Dutch anti-Semitism monitoring organization. Additionally, in 2018 a broad swathe of leaders from the Jewish communities in both [Poland](#) and [Ukraine](#) issued open letters decrying a rise in anti-Semitic speech or incidents in those countries as well.

The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act emphasizes the urgency of filling this special envoy position in a timely manner and lays out absolute minimum qualifications for the job. It would also boost the envoy's chances of success by ensuring that he or she reports directly to the Secretary of State, by elevating the position to the rank of ambassador, and by authorizing the envoy to coordinate efforts across the entire U.S. government with regard to anti-Semitism in foreign countries.

We would also encourage you to follow in the footsteps of the House Foreign Affairs Committee by adopting an amendment to the Act in order to set a limit on the time that this position is theoretically permitted to remain vacant, stating that "not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 120 after any such position becomes vacant, the President shall nominate the Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating anti-Semitism under section 59 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, as amended by subsection (a) of this section."

The Combating European Anti-Semitism Act also makes a worthwhile contribution to this effort. It expresses the sense of Congress that it is in the U.S. interest to combat anti-Semitism at home and

abroad, that there is a need to ensure the security of European Jewish communities, and that the U.S. should continue to emphasize in multilateral bodies the importance of combating anti-Semitism.

This bill also amends the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to require the State Department's annual report on International Religious Freedom to include, for each relevant European country, a description of the security needs of European Jewish communities, efforts by European governments to adopt and apply a working definition of anti-Semitism, educational efforts to mitigate anti-Semitic animus, and U.S. efforts to share information and best practices with local institutions to combat anti-Semitic incidents in Europe.

As this bill states, "anti-Semitism is a challenge to the basic principles of tolerance, pluralism, and democracy, and the shared values that bind Americans and Europeans together." We look to our leaders in Congress, especially your Committee, to take action during these critical times, helping to ensure American leadership in the world and the protection of vulnerable Jewish communities abroad.

Sincerely,

Agudath Israel of America

American Jewish Committee

Anti-Defamation League

B'nai B'rith International

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.

HIAS

Human Rights First

J Street

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Labor Committee

The Jewish Federations of North America

JWI (Jewish Women International)

National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry

National Council of Jewish Women

Union for Reform Judaism

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America