

HOLOCAUST-ERA INSURANCE ISSUE

STATEMENT BY ROMAN KENT

Treasurer, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

The Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act (H.R. 1746), proposed legislation currently pending in Congress, would reopen processes that were established to deal with Holocaust-era insurance policies through the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (“ICHEIC”).

The mission of ICHEIC was to identify and compensate previously unpaid, pre-war Jewish insurance policies, at no cost to claimants. However, the ICHEIC process covered only part of the European insurance market. Many European insurance companies were not part of the ICHEIC process. Ultimately, five large European insurance companies participated in ICHEIC, in addition to the German insurance companies which participated as part of the agreement with the German Foundation. The German Foundation provided a DM 10 billion fund, primarily for former slave and forced laborers.

In the end, ICHEIC distributed approximately a half-billion dollars in payments to Holocaust-era insurance policy-holders and heirs of policy-holders and in funding for critically needed homecare for thousands of elderly and ailing Holocaust survivors. In addition, through the efforts of ICHEIC, the names of over 500,000 (most likely to be Jewish) Holocaust-era policy-holders were published.

We are concerned that the proposed legislation, though intended to assist survivors at a time when they need it most, will have negative consequences for survivors worldwide and will ultimately cause serious harm to the common goal of all who are involved in this issue, especially to the critical efforts to assist the neediest survivors.

First, although the ICHEIC claims and appeals processes have concluded, the insurance companies which participated have made commitments to continue to accept and process remaining Jewish Holocaust-era claims – applying the ICHEIC standards in their decisions – at no cost to the claimants and without regard to any statute of limitations. In addition, the Holocaust Claims Processing Office of New York State will assist survivors filing such claims, at no charge.

Second, we believe that the proposed legislation may well raise the expectations of survivors only, in the end, to disappoint them. The costs, time and effort required to engage in litigation, as the legislation provides, will be excessive, if not prohibitive. In addition, the mandatory publication by the insurance companies of all policy-holders will, at this point, yield little new information regarding Jewish policy-holders. Even assuming that European data protection hurdles could be overcome, most of the policies which would be disclosed would not be Jewish-purchased policies; many of the policies would have been paid; and many of those not paid would have been previously compensated. Thus, we are concerned that the huge expectations that the legislation will generate on the part of survivors will simply not be met – leading to upset, disappointment and frustration.

Finally, the proposed insurance legislation will, by effectively reopening previous agreements, significantly damage vital, on-going Holocaust-related negotiations with Germany and other governments for the continuation and expansion of hundreds of millions of dollars in crucial funding for the neediest survivors in the United States and worldwide. At the same time, it will undermine the support the U.S. government provides to survivors as other governments lose faith in the ability of the U.S. to keep its promises.

In addition to the Claims Conference, a number of national Jewish organizations, consisting of the American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, Bnai Brith International, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, World Jewish Congress, Agudath Israel of America, the Holocaust Restitution Committee, World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, opposed H.R. 1746 as originally submitted.

As a Holocaust survivor who has chaired the negotiations with the German government, I firmly believe that H.R. 1746, as drafted, will prove detrimental to the general interests of survivors in the U.S. and around the world.

We are most appreciative of the tremendously important role the U.S. Congress has played in Holocaust restitution and we request support for one of the highest priorities for Holocaust survivors - the failure of many governments in Eastern Europe to adequately address the issue of Jewish Holocaust-era property.

July 7, 2008



American Jewish Committee
A Century of Leadership

Department of International Jewish Affairs

1156 Fifteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

Main: 202.785.4200 Direct: 202.785.5495 Fax: 202.785.4115 Email: bakera@ajc.org

Rabbi Andrew Baker, Director

February 4, 2008

Hon. Barney Frank
Chairman,
House Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Spencer Bachus
Ranking Minority Member,
House Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frank and Congressman Bachus,

As an official observer of the International Commission for Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, the American Jewish Committee is quite familiar with its efforts to identify policies and match them with claimants. The ICHEIC process was complicated and prolonged. It sought the records of participating insurance companies as well as other archival information and relied on victims' lists prepared by Yad Vashem in order to identify a large but likely list of policy holders that could then be shared via the internet. In the end thousands of claims were found and paid by participating insurers. Many other claims against now defunct companies were also paid by ICHEIC. Its additional humanitarian funds have been used to make small payments to those with only anecdotal evidence of insurance policies and to support welfare projects designed to assist needy Holocaust survivors.

No doubt some people believe that ICHEIC did not do everything it could to identify Holocaust-era policies, and a few even think that some insurance

companies willfully sought to hide documentation. But such views cannot be supported by our own observation of ICHEIC's operations.

H.R. 1746 would require insurance companies to provide extensive lists of prewar policies without any prior vetting to determine if they were held by Holocaust victims. It would also open the door to a new set of legal battles in American courts. As the American Gathering and the Claims Conference have noted, both these steps would actually be detrimental to the concerns of Holocaust survivors and their heirs. Such unvetted lists would only create false expectations among claimants. The new burdens imposed on the companies would effectively renege on the promise of "legal peace" that was instrumental in securing their participation in the first place. Such promises have also been a key to settling other Holocaust-era claims, and H.R. 1746 could adversely affect similar negotiations in the future.

Despite the fact that ICHEIC has closed its doors, participating insurance companies have agreed to continue to receive new claims. State insurance regulators should be vigilant to make sure that they live up to these promises. We understand that the State Department Office for Holocaust Issues is also prepared to intervene on behalf of individual claimants should that become necessary. Although not perfect, we believe these measures should be sufficient to address the concerns of individual survivors who may still have insurance claims to pursue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "B".

Andrew Baker



OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION

NATIONAL CHAIR
DAN S. LEVY

NATIONAL DIRECTOR
ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN

ASSOCIATE CHAIR
BARBARA S. BAKER
HOWARD P. BERKOWITZ
KENNETH J. BALKIN
MAXWELL D. GREENBERG
BURTON M. JOSEPH
SURFON S. LEVINSON
WILIAM SAC SOTO
DANIEL STRASSLER
GLEN A. YODanis

VICE CHAIR
SEYMUR S. BONDRO
DAVID GREENFIELD
THOMAS G. HAMBURGER
JUDITH KATZ
CYNTHIA MARKS
LAWRENCE J. MILLER
CYNTHIA E. MOSE
JUDITH SALLER
DONALD STEINBERG

HONORARY VICE CHAIRS
ROBERTO BARBERO
RUTH BORDO NYE
EDWARD SHOFERMAN
LEO GREENLAND
IRVING DOBSON
CORNELIUS JOSEPH
MAX N. KAMPE, MAN
SAM KANE
BERNARD MARO, S
BARUCL H. MILLER
MELTON MULLER
LESTER POLLACK
ALVIN J. ROSENTHAL
ROBERT SCHWARTZ

SECRETARY
RUBEN H. NARBYL
ADJUNCT SECRETARY
DAVID KOPPELMAN
SECRETARY
J. DAVID MEHLER
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
JUDITH SPIEL

STAFF AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

ADMINISTRATIVE
JOSEPH A. BUCKLEMAN
KIM
REBECCA HARTLEY
JANE
BRADLEY PARKER
TIMOTHY
MARVIN D. NATHAN
DANIEL
DANIEL D. FORTAUSSER
CO-CHAIR
DAVID J. MULLERSON
ADMINISTRATIVE CO-CHAIR
DAVID FORTAUSSER
ADMINISTRATIVE CO-CHAIR
JULIA E. FORTAUSSER
LEONARD
ROBERT D. BARKON
LEONARD BARKON
DEBRA WARE SPECTOR
NANCY ADAMSON
MICHAEL S. FORTAUSSER
LEONARD BARKON
DAVID L. BLOD
DANIEL
FRED S. COHEN
LEONARD BARKON
GARY WALTERS
WALTERS
GARY WALTERS
GARY WALTERS
GARY WALTERS
GARY WALTERS

DEPUTY NATIONAL DIRECTOR
KATHY JACOBSON

DIVISION DIRECTORS

CIVIL RIGHTS
DEBORAH R. LAUREN
COMMUNITY
MARGARET S. LEVY
EDUCATION
ROBERT
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
MICHAEL A. KULLMAN
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
SAM MEYERS
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
MICHAEL A. SILVER
LAW CENTER
SAMUEL E. RAPPAPORT
RESEARCH AND POLICY STUDIES
CHRISTOPHER C. CANNON
REGULATORY OPERATIONS
ROBERT VOLTSON

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
WENDY HARRIS

LEGAL COUNSEL
DEBRA S. ROSS

February 4, 2008

The Honorable Barney Frank
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services
US House of Representatives
2252 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2104

Dear Chairman Frank:

We are writing to express the view that House Resolution 1746, the Holocaust Insurance Claims Accountability Act, is not necessary and undermines the credibility of efforts by the U.S. government, and many non-government organizations to resolve these problems.

Over recent years, culminating in the agreement Concerning Holocaust Era Insurance claims on October 16, 2002, there have been a series of hands-on steps to make sure that all Holocaust survivors who have insurance claims receive a measure of justice.

In addition to all the claims that have already been recognized and for which monies have been dispersed, the ICHEIC also has made clear that its "member companies intend to continue to address inquires that are sent to a specific company and will honor legitimate claims." Such cases, which we understand to date are few in number, are and will be handled in a serious fashion.

It is therefore our belief that the agreements which were comprehensive in nature and which were supported by many of the most outspoken institutions on behalf of Holocaust survivors, including State Insurance Commissioners, members of the Administration, and major Jewish organizations, should be respected and continue to be the foundation for resolving any future claims.

HR 1746, as we noted, is unnecessary and does not serve the needs of Holocaust survivors nor the interest of the credibility of agreements on these matters of great sensitivity.

Sincerely,

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director



B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

February 6, 2008

The Honorable Barney Frank, Chairman
The Honorable Spencer Bachus, Ranking Member
Committee on Financial Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Frank and Bachus:

On behalf of B'nai B'rith International's more than 200,000 members and supporters, I write to express concern about H.R. 1746, the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act of 2007.

B'nai B'rith, which has long been actively engaged in efforts to obtain restitution for Holocaust survivors and reemerging European Jewish communities, has always regarded the interests of survivors as a leading priority of our organization, and we are determined to fight for justice for those who have suffered so greatly. We generally welcome any legislation or other policy initiatives that advance their cause. In this context, we have noted the opposition of some prominent critics of this particular legislation, such as former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Eizenstat, Chairman Roman Kent of the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. Upon careful consideration, we cannot help but defer to their reservations about the bill.

This legislation comes in the wake of a lengthy process resulting in the payment of thousands of claims, amounting to over \$300 million, by insurance companies that cooperated with the International Commission for Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC). While this process may have been imperfect, it did involve the meticulous research of insurance policies and the identities of Holocaust victims who held those policies. ICHEIC not only facilitated the payment of claims against existing companies; it also paid out claims against now-defunct companies and funded survivor assistance programs. Furthermore, participating insurers have pledged to continue fielding new claims, so an important avenue remains open to survivors.

B'nai B'rith's fear is that this legislation, if passed, could invite new litigation that would disrupt the hard-fought legal peace promised to European governments and companies in exchange for their cooperation with ICHEIC. We are therefore concerned that future restitution negotiations might be compromised if this bill becomes law. We also worry that the legislation would unfairly raise the hopes of survivors without being able to satisfy their expectations.

B'nai B'rith urges that your Committee weigh these considerations in evaluating the efficacy of H.R. 1746. Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Eric Fusfield
Director of Legislative Affairs



World Headquarters
501 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022, USA
Phone: +1 212 755 57 70
Fax: +1 212 755 58 83
Website: www.worldjewishcongress.org

Israel Branch
9a Diskin Street, 5th Floor
Kiryat Wolfsohn, Jerusalem 96440
Phone: +972 2 633 3000
Fax: +972 2 633 3011
E-mail: wjc@wjc.co.il

January 31, 2008

Hon. Barney Frank
U.S. House of Representatives
2252 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington DC 20515

Re: H.R. 1746
Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act

Dear Congressman Frank,

The World Jewish Congress ("WJC") has been deeply involved in the struggle to obtain justice for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The WJC has been involved, among other matters, in the Swiss Banks Settlement of \$1.2 billion, the DM 10 billion German Foundation fund providing compensation for former slave and forced laborers, and the disclosure of the Nazi past of Kurt Waldheim, former President of Austria.

Our serious concerns about the consequences of enacting H.R. 1746 compel us to write. While we believe that few will benefit from the legislation, it will, at the same time, significantly impair ongoing and future funding for holocaust survivors around the world.

First, not many survivors will be able to successfully sue the insurance companies. The overwhelming majority of policy holder names the companies will be required to publish will not be Jewish, while many of the policies which will be published already will have been disclosed and paid, or otherwise compensated, through the process established by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims ("ICHEIC"). Thus, the great Anticipation engendered by the bill's mandatory disclosure requirement will turn into major disappointment in the survivor community when compensation for unpaid policies is ultimately paid, at most, only to a handful of survivors.

Second, the proposed legislation will breach existing agreements which already have resulted in Holocaust survivors and their heirs being paid hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation. These agreements guaranteed participating insurance companies they would not be sued subsequent for holocaust-era policies. Yet, without the agreements, ICHEIC would not have been able to pay a single insurance claim, while the German Foundation would have reduced its payments for survivors by tens of millions of dollars.

Finally, passage of H.R. 1746 will severely damage negotiations with Germany and other governments regarding critical funding for the benefit of Holocaust survivors worldwide.

Such negotiations, affecting far more survivors and involving much more in compensation than will ever be realized by survivors through H.R. 1746, will be irreparably harmed by the utter loss caused by violation of existing agreements, which will be the result of the bill's enactment into law.

Sincerely,

Michael Schneider

Michael Schneider,
Secretary General

May 2, 2008

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Chairman, Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Democracy and
Human Rights
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned organizations have been active in efforts to secure a measure of justice for survivors of the Holocaust and appreciate the ongoing work of the United States Congress to highlight and defend the interests of Holocaust survivors.

In advance of the May 6th Subcommittee on International Operations hearing on Holocaust-era insurance restitution, we write to express the opinion that House Resolution 1746, the Holocaust Insurance Claims Accountability Act, would not be helpful to these efforts. Passage of H.R. 1746 would also undermine the credibility of the broader effort by the U.S. government and others to resolve these problems.

The process established by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) identified and paid over \$300 million in insurance claims to tens of thousands of claimants and recovered additional funds for home care and other social services benefits for survivors worldwide.

In addition to all the claims that have already been recognized and paid, the companies which participated in ICHEIC have made it clear that they will continue to process Holocaust-era claims received after the close of ICHEIC and they are currently doing so.

Passage of the legislation would jeopardize critical ongoing negotiations that are of tremendous importance to thousands of needy Holocaust survivors in the U.S. and around the world.

We welcome the commitment that Congress has demonstrated to this issue and we will be glad to work with the Congress on constructive ways to continue to help survivors and their families.

Sincerely,

Anti-Defamation League
Bnai Brith International
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
World Jewish Congress



**Agudath
Israel
of America**
אגודת ישראל באמריקה

May 2, 2008

Rabbi Abba Cohen
Director and Counsel

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Chairman, Subcommittee on International Operations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: H.R. 1746, Holocaust Insurance

Dear Chairman Nelson,

We write on behalf of Agudath Israel of America to express our views on H.R. 1746, the "Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act of 2007." The Subcommittee on International Operations is expected to take up the measure early next week.

Founded 86 years ago, Agudath Israel is a national Orthodox Jewish organization affiliated with Agudath Israel World Organization (AIWO). Among our activities -- both here in the U.S. and on the international scene -- is to protect the rights of those who survived the Nazi horror and to promote efforts to obtain a measure of justice on their behalf. AIWO has been an active member of the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the World Jewish Restitution Organization, umbrella organizations that for decades have been in the forefront of advocacy for Holocaust survivors.

Agudath Israel takes note of the steps already taken to address the matter of unpaid Holocaust era insurance policies. We are concerned that, while some claimants may benefit from the proposed legislation, many others will be hurt. The original agreements yielded commitments -- including by the U.S. government -- that subsequent, related lawsuits against the participating countries and companies would be discouraged. H.R. 1746, in effect, would reopen these previous agreements, putting at risk substantial funding which is critical for survivors in need around the world.

We applaud Congress for its well-intentioned efforts. However, those efforts might be more productively channeled to areas which to date have not been adequately addressed -- particularly regarding property restitution in Central and Eastern Europe -- rather than risk undermining agreements that have benefited so many..

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Abba Cohen

Holocaust Restitution Committee

April 30, 2008

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Chairman, Foreign Relations Subcommittee
on International Operations and Organizations,
Democracy and Human Rights.
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Nelson,

The Holocaust Restitution Committee is an organization of Holocaust survivors dedicated to the recovery of their homes and other properties which were seized by the Nazis during World War II and subsequently nationalized by communist regimes. In my capacity as a survivor and president of the Holocaust Restitution Committee, I have testified before the U.S. Helsinki Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (in 2002) and before the European Union Parliament in Brussels (in 2003) regarding the issue of property restitution. I also was a witness at the hearing "America's Role in Addressing Outstanding Holocaust Issues," held by the House Subcommittee on Europe, in October 2007.

We write to express our great concerns regarding H.R. 1746, the Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act, which we understand the Senate Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Democracy and Human Rights will consider. Although H.R. 1746 is intended to benefit Holocaust survivors, we are quite worried that it will be of no assistance for the overwhelming majority, while putting current and future benefits for survivors in real jeopardy.

The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims ("ICHEIC") published the names of over 500,000 (most likely) Jewish Holocaust-era policy holders. Owners of such policies, or their heirs, or anyone in their families, had the opportunity to submit claims to ICHEIC based on the policies. In addition, the insurance companies which participated in the process established by ICHEIC continue to accept and process claims, at no cost to the claimants and regardless of the statute of limitations.

In contrast, the lawsuits in federal court authorized by H.R. 1746 will be time-consuming and expensive. Few survivors, if any, will be able to prove, at this point in time, that they possessed an insurance policy. Even with the proposed legislation's requirement that companies reveal the names

166-25 Powells Cove Blvd.
Beechhurst, N.Y. 11357

Tel.:
(718) 747-5943

email:
evron@worldnet.att.net

Peter Koppenheim
International President

Yehuda Evron
U.S. President

Executive Committee
Lewis R. Goodman, O.B.E.
Dan Jacob
Marc Ratner
Maurice Tabaksman
William Z. Zimmerspitz

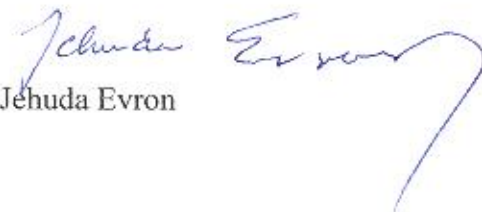
of all policy holders, and assuming that stringent European data protection laws could be overcome, the overwhelming majority of policies disclosed will not be Jewish-purchased policies. The bill, regrettably, will most likely create a roller coaster of emotions, generating huge expectations of payments for survivors, only to bitterly disappoint and frustrate them in the end.

Finally and most important, we are very troubled by the damage this bill will cause to future negotiations for additional compensation for survivors. H.R. 1746 would violate those agreements that have already been reached and will make it difficult, if not impossible, for any government negotiating funding for Holocaust survivors to trust that commitments made will be upheld. In a letter to the late Tom Lantos, in his capacity as Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, Klaus Scharioth, the Ambassador from Germany to the U.S., was absolutely clear that enactment of H.R. 1746 "would make it much harder to convince industry not only in Germany, but anywhere in the world to enter into agreements that ensure timely compensation of Holocaust survivors." The risk to ongoing and future payments for poor Holocaust survivors is simply far too great.

As a result, we urge you to help stop this initiative, well before it is presented to the full Congress for approval.

In addition, we request your assistance to press those countries which have not dealt with the issue of restitution to do so promptly.

Thank you,


Jehuda Evron

World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust

We are the Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust persecuted by the Nazis in ghettos, in camps, in hiding, on the run or forced to leave Nazi occupied Europe. Our objectives are to represent the interests of the child survivor community, to support each other, to keep alive the memory of the six million Jews - including the 1.5 million children - murdered during the Holocaust and to pass on our legacy to future generations. We pursue these objectives by telling the stories of our survival, by community interaction, education, holding conferences and by fighting anti-Semitism.

The Hidden Child Foundation/ADL, NY KT A -
Kindertransport Association, NY
Friends and Alumni of OSE-USA, MD
European Association of Jewish Child
Survivors of the Holocaust

Ukrainian Assn. of Jews Former Prisoners
of Ghetto and Nazi Concentration Camps Aloumim,
Israel Association of Children of the Holocaust in
Poland

Assn. of Child Survivors in Croatia
Assn. of Jewish War Children - Amsterdam Assn. of
Unknown Children, Netherlands Child Survivors Group
of British Columbia Child Survivor Group of Sydney,
Australia Child Survivors' Assn. of Great Britain-AJR
Child-Survivors-Deutschland e. V.
Child Survivors, Hungary
Child Survivors/Hidden Children of Toronto Children
of The Shoah,

Figli Della Shoah, Italy
Generaciones de la Shea en Argentina Hidden Child
Assn. of the Netherlands Hidden Child-Praha
Holocaust Children in Sweden
Jews Rescuing Jews, Israel
Melbourne Child Survivors of the Holocaust Mengele
Twins, Israel
Montreal Child Survivors/Hidden Children Organizacia
Hidden Child,

Ukryvane Diefa Slovensko
Swiss Assn. of Hidden Children
Terezin Initiative-International
Terezin Assn.
Union of Former Ghetto and
KZ Prisoners, Lithuania
Yesh-Ghildren and Orphans Holocaust
Survivors in Israel

Assn. of Holocaust Survivors from the
Former Soviet Union - Brooklyn, NY Bay Area
Hidden Children, CA
Child Survivor Group of Orange Co. CA Child
Survivors, Chicago
Child Survivors of the Holocaust of Houston Child
Survivors of the Holocaust, LA
Child Survivors of the Holocaust
of N.E. Ohio
Child Survivors of the Holocaust, NM Child
Survivors/Hidden Children
of Palm Beach Co.
Greater Boston Child Survivor Group Greater Seattle
Child Survivors
Hidden Child/Child Survivor Group
of St. Louis
Hidden Children/Chicago
Hidden Children of Rockland County, NY Hidden
Children of the Holocaust
of Bergen County, NJ
Hidden Children of Westchester, NY Hidden
Children/Child Survivors of
Michigan
Holocaust Child Survivors of Connecticut Hungarian
Hidden Children - New York Jewish Child Holocaust
Survivors,
Philadelphia
Oregon Holocaust Survivors,
Refugees and Families
Rocky Mountain Regional Gathering
of Child Holocaust Survivors
Survivors of the Holocaust-The Last
Generation, Washington/Baltimore
Yaldei Hashoah, San Francisco

July 5, 2008

Hon. John Conyers
2426 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Conyers

The United States House of Representatives is presently considering action on HR 1746. This is a bill designed to give Holocaust survivors legal recourse to sue Holocaust-era insurance companies in US Federal court for insurance claims they deem are owed but were never paid either in part or wholly.

The majority of Jewish organizations in the United States and the US government oppose the pending legislation for a variety of reasons. They have to do with the small chance for recovery of claims in the lifetime of any claimants and the negative effect on pending negotiations between Germany and the US on a number of issues.

The World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust joins those opposing the pending bill because it contains the federal cause of action section. We believe that the bill should exclude from the cause of action any members of ICHEIC since they will continue to process cases in any event. Passage of HR 1746 would mean a number of negative outcomes. There would be an extremely small chance for favorable action in court for any litigant. It is most likely that very large attorney's fees would result for the lawyers involved in bringing such legal actions. Finally, a more negative climate would be created between the United States and Germany. The last of these results would have impact negatively on other pending or future actions of potential benefit to Holocaust survivors. On balance, the WF sees no other course of action than to oppose HR 1746 as it is written.

Stephen F. Adler, Executive Vice President
World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust
for the Executive Committee

President: Stefanie Seltzer (USA), Executive Vice President: Steve Adler (USA), Vice Presidents: Ghana Amon (Israel), Anita Ekstein (Canada), Rudolph Jacobson, (USA), Max Lazer (Netherlands), Rene Uchtman (USA), Daisy Miller (USA), Henri Obsfeld (UK), Menta Svob (Croatia), Treasurer. Natafie Gold (USA), Sea"etary: Marianne Kronenberg (USA).

Address: WFJCSH, PO Box 98005, SeatUe, WA 98139-0005. Telephone: 248-932-1835. Email: holocaustchild@comcast.net. Website: www.wfjcs.org. A 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization in the USA

American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Inc.

570 SEVENTH AVENUE
11th floor
NEW YORK, NY 10018
TEL (212) 921-3871 FAX (212) 575-1918

May 5, 2008

FRITZ WEINSCHENK*
President

ROBERT L. LEHMAN*
President Emeritus

CURT C. SILBERMAN*
Chairman of the Board Emeritus

CAROL KAHN STRAUSS*
FRANZ WINKLER*
Vice Presidents

STEPHEN S. WERTHEIMER*
Treasurer

ALBERT O. PHILIPP
Assistant Treasurer

NORBERT WOLLHEIM
Secretary

ALBERT U. TIETZ
Assistant Secretary

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JERRY A. BRUNELL
CARLOS DOERNBERG
HANS J. FRANK
CHARLES H. FRIEDMAN
FRED GRUBEL
ERNEST M. GRUNEBaum*
HANS M. HAMMELBACHER
STEPHEN JACOBY
MICHAEL D. LISSNER
JOSEPH MAIER
GERTRUD MAINZER
SIG MAYER
ALBERT MEINHARDT
STEPHEN ROSSKAMM*
PETER ROTHOLZ
ISMAR SCHORSCH
RAYMOND V.J. SCHRAG*
WERNER A. STEIN
FREDERICK C. TUCHMANN

*Members of Executive Council

DENNIS E. ROHRBAUGH
Executive Assistant

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Chairman, Senate Subcommittee
On International Relations
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

Founded in 1941 by refugees from Nazi Germany, the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe is a non-profit organization which represents Nazi-victims from Germany, Austria, and other German-speaking countries of Europe and their descendants. We are affiliated with the Irgun Olei Merkaz Europa, the organization of Jewish immigrants from Central Europe who found refuge in Palestine, subsequently Israel, after 1933. We were and still are jointly devoted to seeking compensation for the personal suffering and injuries sustained by survivors of the Holocaust as well as restitution of property seized by the Nazis, of whom many of our members were among the first victims.

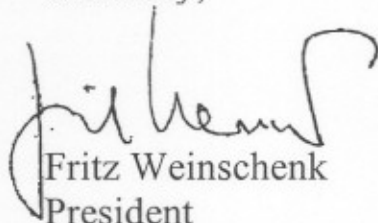
We are well aware of and greatly appreciate the many Congressional actions which have helped survivors, but write to express our deep concerns regarding the "Holocaust Insurance Accountability Act" (House Resolution 1746).

While we favor any steps which help survivors and their heirs to recover property which is rightfully theirs, including the

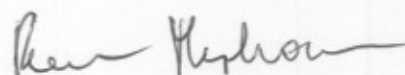
proceeds of pre-war insurance policies, we fear that the very few claimants this proposed legislation may help will come at great cost to the survivors in general. The members of our organization have and continue to benefit from the funding provided by prior agreements, which will be upended by the enactment of H.R. 1746. This proposed law will seriously jeopardize critical on-going negotiations with Germany and other governments to provide critical funding currently required by the neediest survivors in the U.S. and worldwide.

Again, we thank you for your serious efforts on behalf of survivors and for considering our position.

Sincerely,



Fritz Weinschenk
President
American Federation of
Jews from Central Europe, Inc.



Reuven Merhav
Ambassador (ret.)
Chairman of the Presidium
Association of Israelis of
Central European Origin