

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for including \$5 million in funding for the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This is a timely and necessary program that responds to an immediate bipartisan public policy priority, and it uses public dollars to leverage private support.

There are approximately 100,000 Holocaust survivors living in the United States today—with an estimated 30,000 living in poverty.¹ After witnessing the darkest period of the last century and the resiliency of the human spirit, survivors built a new life in the United States, raised families, and enriched our country. Many are age 85 or older. As a group, Holocaust survivors are at increased risk of depression, social isolation, and extremely poor outcomes associated with institutionalization, which can be emotionally and physically devastating for survivors as a trigger of the traumas of forced institutionalizations and relocations during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program established a Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care (Center), which leverages public-private partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector to address the urgent needs of the survivor population and the nonprofit organizations that support them. Thus far, a total of 55 organizations in 21 states supporting more than 100 programs in 41 communities have been funded through the Center. Each community-based organization (sub-grantee) is funded for two years. All sub-

¹ "One third of American Holocaust survivors live in poverty, aid group says" Jewish Telegraphic Agency. January 26, 2018. <https://www.jta.org/2018/01/26/united-states/one-third-of-american-holocaust-survivors-live-in-poverty-aid-group-says>.

grantees are required to contribute matching resources equal to approximately 40 percent of the total program budget.


Since the program's inaugural year in FY2015, person-centered, trauma-informed (PCTI) innovations have led to decreased loneliness and depression; reduced caregiver stress; increased feelings of safety, security, and social support; improved feelings of independence and ability to age at home; and a better understanding of triggers and behaviors linked to trauma among professionals and families participating in PCTI trainings. At this time, the Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care has advanced innovations for the following populations:


- **Holocaust Survivors.** The program has infused trauma-informed approaches into all aspects of service delivery.
- **Family Caregivers.** The program has advanced innovative approaches to caregiver support to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers and reduce factors that lead to early institutionalization of Holocaust survivors.
- **Providers.** The program has increased the ability of professionals (including dentists, social workers, nurses, and law professionals) to provide PCTI care to Holocaust survivors.
- **Aging Service Network at large.** The program has increased the professional expertise of the Aging Services Network in replicable PCTI practices.

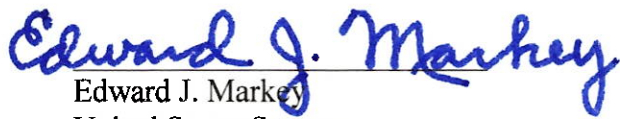
Understanding trauma can help providers better manage risk. As a matter of public health, new approaches need to be developed and implemented to reduce the impact of trauma on individuals and to build the capacity of providers to be informed and trained in the practice of trauma-informed approaches. Advancing innovations, teaching best practices, increasing capacity, and improving service delivery within the Aging Services Network is a priority of Older Americans Act programs. Consistent with this mission, the achievements of the Holocaust Survivor initiative can have a lasting impact on the country as the shift toward an increasingly older population endures.

While we understand the fiscal constraints under which you are working, we urge you to prioritize this cost-effective, innovative initiative to support Holocaust survivors in FY 2020. We look forward to working together to ensure that Holocaust survivors are able to live in dignity, comfort, and security in their homes and communities for the remainder of their lives and for the benefit of future generations of older adults.

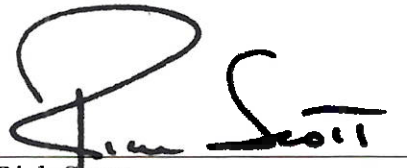
Sincerely,


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator


Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



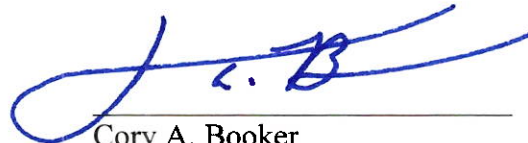
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



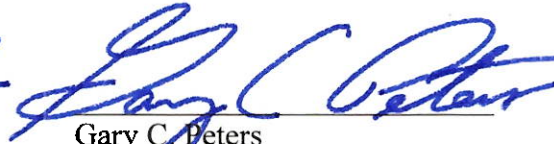
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



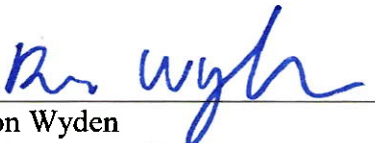
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



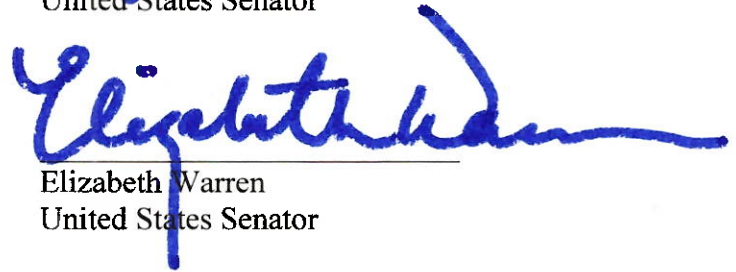
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



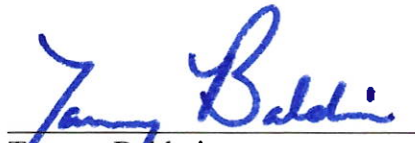
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



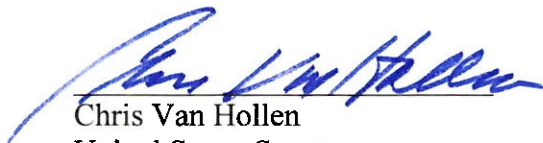
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



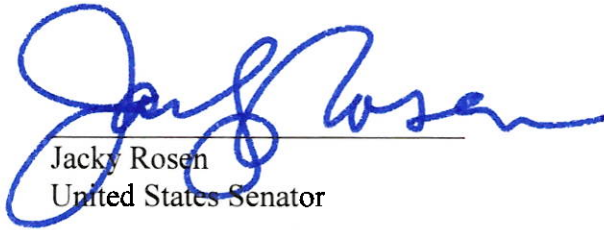
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



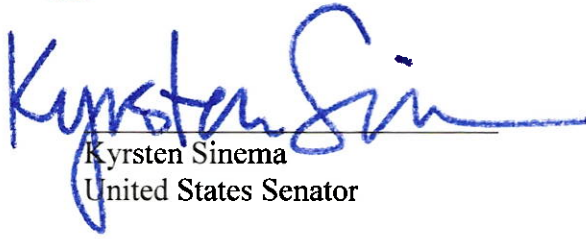
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



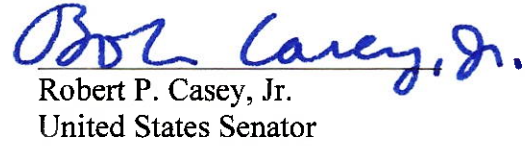
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator