



Representative Henry A. Waxman
H.Con.Res. 323
November 30, 2010

Madame Speaker. There are not many Holocaust survivors left in the world. Each year as the number dwindles, we worry about how people will remember the evils of the Holocaust when there are no longer eye witnesses to give their personal accounts. We promote remembrance and teach tolerance. We fight Holocaust deniers and those who grotesquely glorify the Holocaust and denigrate the memory of the six million.

But while we focus intently on ensuring awareness of the tragedy of the past we are losing sight of a tragedy in our midst: Many Holocaust survivors are living their final days in poverty.

According to the Jewish Federations of North America, more than half of the 127,000 Holocaust survivors living in the United States fall beneath 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, meaning they live on less than \$21,660 per year. Holocaust survivors are five times more likely to be living below the poverty line than the general senior population.

In Los Angeles, one in six survivors requires community assistance. In the past year, the LA Jewish Federation has seen the number of survivors needing emergency assistance for basic housing, food, medical, dental and transportation needs rise by 20%.

The vast majority of these survivors are now in their 80's and 90's and two-thirds of them live alone. Very few have any family support network, which is not surprising considering that so few had family that survived the war. As a result, many are forced into institutional care because they cannot afford to receive care in their homes.

While institutionalized care settings are beneficial for many older adults, Holocaust survivors react poorly and can be prone to emotional suffering and physical deterioration from sights, sounds and routines that may resurrect Holocaust experiences. Research indicates that survivors, in particular, benefit tremendously from access to social service programs that allow them to age in place in their current residences. It is a solution that is both cost-effective and humane.

As one of the original sponsors of the U.S. Administration on Aging grant program now known as the Community Innovations In Aging In Place, I am hopeful that we can find the resources to help these survivors in their time of need.

I urge my colleagues to support H.Con.Res. 323 and I look forward to working with them to achieve its goal of ensuring that all Holocaust survivors in the United States are able to live with dignity, comfort, and security in their remaining years.