

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 29, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Having recently observed Holocaust Remembrance Day, when communities in the United States and across the world commemorated the more than six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, we want to express our strong support for the restitution of Jewish communal, private, and heirless property in Central and Eastern Europe.

The unprecedented looting of Jewish assets was a central aspect of the Holocaust. Seventy years after the Holocaust and twenty-five years following the fall of the Iron Curtain, a substantial percentage of formerly Jewish-owned, real properties confiscated by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust have not been returned, nor has compensation been provided to the rightful owners or their heirs.

The Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues in 2009, which the United States endorsed, affirms that "the protection of property rights is an essential component of a democratic society and the rule of law" and recognizes "the importance of restituting or compensating Holocaust-related confiscations made during the Holocaust era between 1933-45." The Declaration also states "the importance of recovering communal and religious immovable property in reviving and enhancing Jewish life, ensuring its future, assisting the welfare needs of Holocaust (Shoah) survivors, and fostering the preservation of Jewish cultural heritage."

Unfortunately, many nations that endorsed this declaration have not fully addressed the restitution of Jewish communal, private, and heirless property. Poland, home to the largest pre-Holocaust Jewish community, has no law on private property. Other countries, including Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Serbia have yet to fully meet their responsibilities to provide restitution.

We acknowledge that positive steps relating to the restitution of communal, private, and heirless property seized from Jews in some of these and other countries have been achieved, but the progress, for the most part, has been slow at best. Much of that progress is a direct result of the bipartisan support for this issue across Administrations and Congresses. We appreciate your engagement on this issue and the engagement of previous Secretaries of State, as well as the support of our ambassadors across Europe. We also commend the exemplary work of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Nicholas Dean, and his predecessors in the Office of Holocaust Issues over the past 15 years, as well as the leadership of the Special Adviser for Holocaust Issues, Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, all of whom have made the return of Holocaust-era assets to their rightful owners, compensation for wrongs committed during the Holocaust, and Holocaust remembrance a priority of our diplomacy in Europe and around the globe.

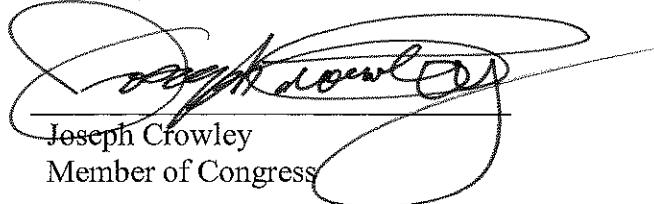
Holocaust victims have waited long enough. Beyond the physical and emotional trauma they suffered 70 years ago, and the impact that trauma continues to have on their lives, many Holocaust survivors in the United States and around the world live in poverty while knowing the property that was stolen from them and their family remains in the hands of governments and private owners who have no rightful claim. The time is now for these governments to pass legislation that ensures a meaningful and expeditious opportunity for property claims to be filed and considered fairly and the property returned or compensated in a timely manner.

As we observe throughout 2015 the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the liberation of the concentration camps, we express our commitment to working with you, our ambassadors, and the Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues to meaningfully address property restitution for Holocaust victims with our colleagues in Europe.

We will continue to make every effort to speak out on this issue and to raise this issue in our interactions with our allies across Europe, and we urge you to do the same to present, together with us, a united voice in support of justice for survivors and their families with no further delay.

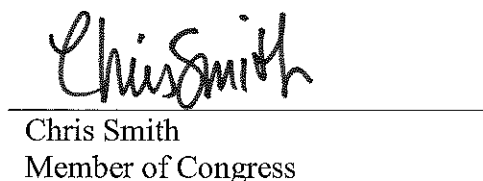
Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



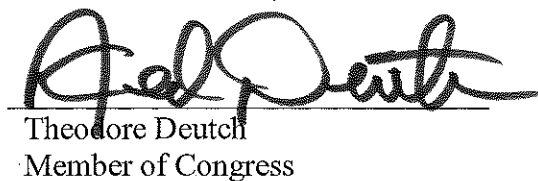
---

Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress



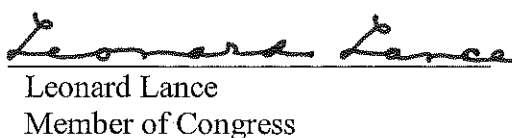
---

Chris Smith  
Member of Congress



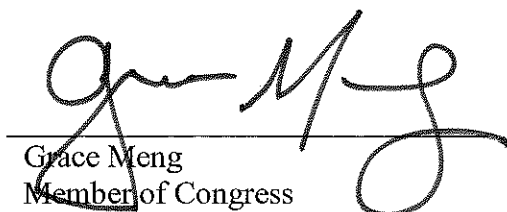
---

Theodore Deutch  
Member of Congress



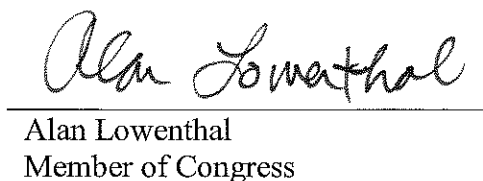
---

Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress



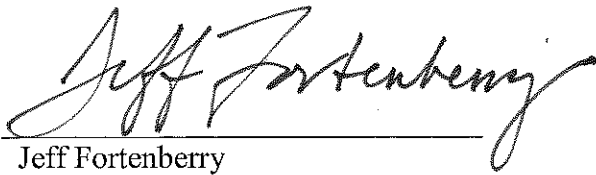
---

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

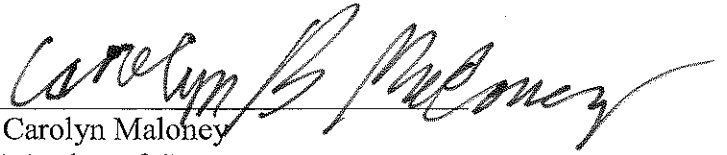


---

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



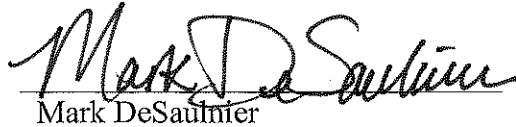
Jeff Fortenberry  
Member of Congress



Carolyn Maloney  
Member of Congress



Bob Dold  
Member of Congress



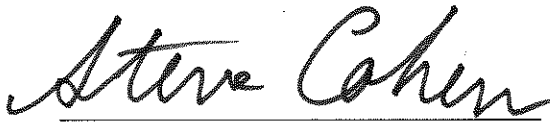
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



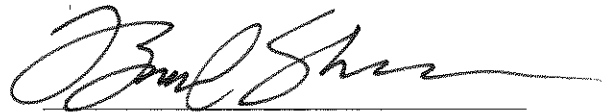
Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



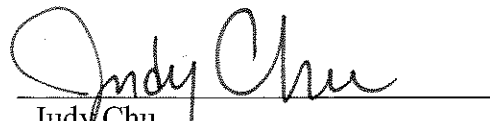
Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



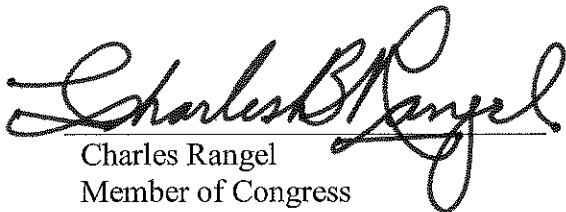
Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



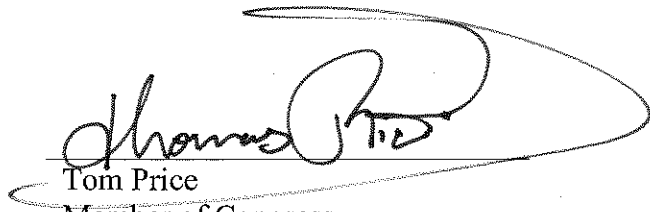
Sander Levin  
Member of Congress




Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

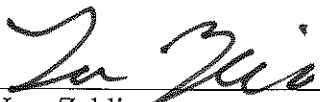


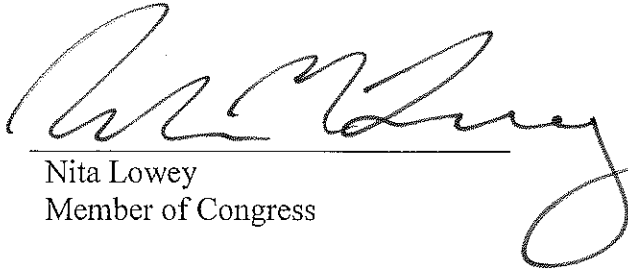
Charles Rangel  
Member of Congress



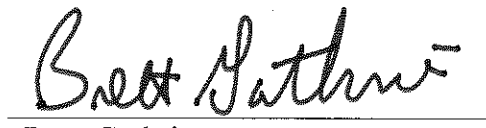
Tom Price  
Member of Congress


  
Susan Davis  
Member of Congress

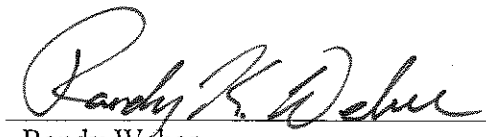
  
Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress


  
Nita Lowey  
Member of Congress

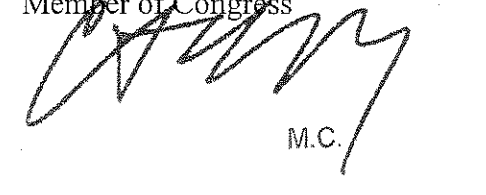
  
Trent Franks  
Member of Congress

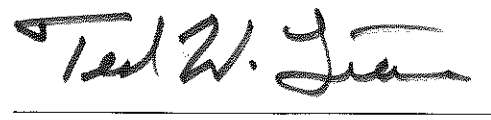
  
Brett Guthrie  
Member of Congress

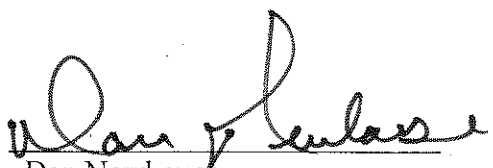
  
Kathleen Rice  
Member of Congress

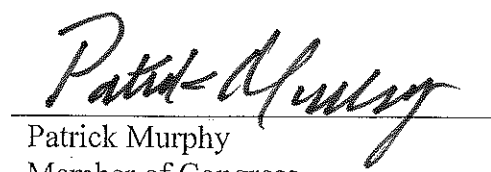
  
Randy Weber  
Member of Congress

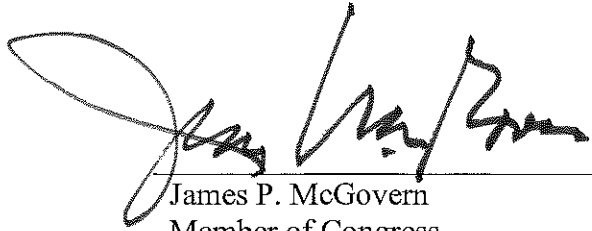
  
Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

  
M.C.  
Curt Clawson  
Member of Congress

  
Ted Lieu  
Member of Congress

  
Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress

  
Patrick Murphy  
Member of Congress



---

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



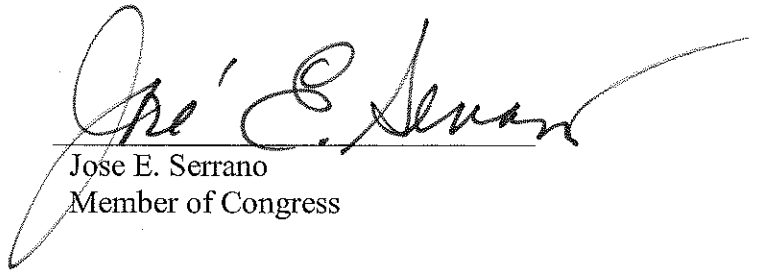
---

Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



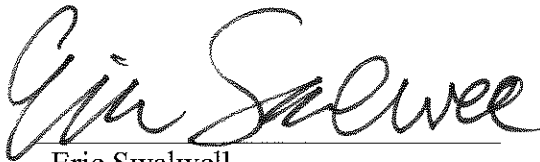
---

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



---

Jose E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



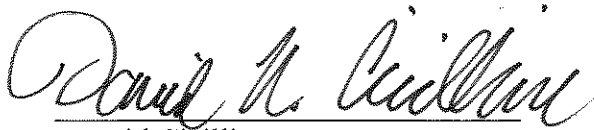
---

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



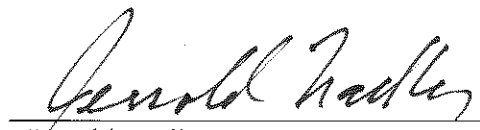
---

Alcee Hastings  
Member of Congress




---

David Cicilline  
Member of Congress



---

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



---

Steve Israel  
Member of Congress

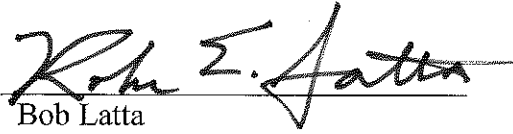


---

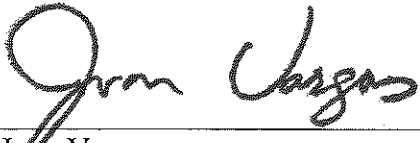
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress



Bob Latta  
Member of Congress



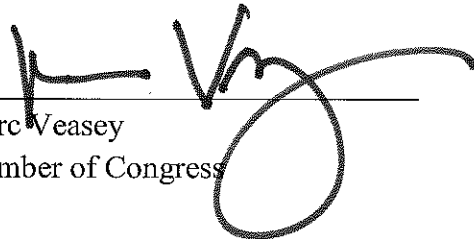
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell  
Member of Congress



Ron DeSantis  
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Joseph Biden  
Vice President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500