

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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### Opening Statement Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney Hearing on “75 Years After the Holocaust: The Ongoing Battle Against Hate” January 29, 2020

Two days ago, the entire world came together to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In addition, 75 years ago this week, in January of 1945, the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was liberated from the Nazis.

It was one of the most infamous sites of the Nazi genocide.

More than a million people were murdered there.

The purpose of today’s hearing is to commemorate these grave anniversaries, to remember those we lost, and to honor those who are still with us.

But it is not enough to simply recognize these dates.

We must also contemplate what led to these atrocities.

We must remember the Holocaust in order to help combat bigotry, hate, and violence of all kinds today.

I am so pleased to have our distinguished panel here today.

I have asked them to help us come together on today’s solemn occasion, help us rise above issues that may divide us, and help us unify our efforts around a common purpose of hope and inclusion.

On this day—of all days—I hope we can all do that.

One issue we will discuss today is what we can do to ensure that future generations never forget the lessons of the Holocaust.

This may sound hard to believe, but the Pew Research Center recently issued a report finding that fewer than half of Americans surveyed knew how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

Another report found that only 38% of American teens surveyed knew the Nazis killed six million Jews, and only a third knew that Hitler was democratically elected.

The best way I know to help people remember the Holocaust is to hear first-hand from the people who went through it.

We are very fortunate to have that opportunity today.

In addition, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, just a few blocks from here, is an outstanding and gripping institution dedicated to remembering the Holocaust in order to fight hate today.

I am also pleased to announce that on Monday, the House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation that I introduced, called the Never Again Education Act, to give teachers additional resources to teach about the Holocaust.

I hope the Senate will pass this bill and send it to the President as soon as possible because the lessons of the past must inform our approach to fighting hate today.

For example, this morning, we will hear testimony about the horrific shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, the most deadly assault against the Jewish community in American history.

After that massacre, a group of Holocaust survivors who volunteer at the Holocaust Museum wrote to the Pittsburgh Jewish Community in solidarity, explaining why they dedicated their lives to sharing the horrors they experienced.

They wrote, and I quote:

“We seek to remind people, especially young people—our country’s future leaders—that hate can never be ignored. Complacency is dangerous. Standing up and pushing back is the only way we can make a better future.”

Unfortunately, there has been a sinister increase in hate crimes recently not only against Jewish communities, but against African-Americans, Muslims, immigrants, and others.

In November, the FBI released data showing the highest number of reported violent hate crimes in the United States in 16 years.

The number of hate groups exploded to more than 1,000 in 2018. This was a record high and a 30% increase over the past four years.

To take just one example, when we watch the gruesome video footage of the neo-Nazi attacks in Charlottesville, we see in excruciating detail the evil that still poisons our society to this day.

I want all of our Members to know that our Committee is dedicated to fighting bigotry, hate, and violence of all kinds.

Today's hearing—which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—is one in a series we are holding on these issues in the 116th Congress.

Chairman Raskin has held four hearings in the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee to confront white supremacy, religious persecution, and our government's response.

Chairman Lynch, from the National Security Subcommittee, has worked with Chairman Raskin to investigate the national security implications of these threats.

Going forward, we are planning additional hearings, including on:

- voter suppression in minority communities,
- anti-Muslim discrimination,
- anti-immigrant actions, and
- issues facing LGBTQ communities.

I have been in touch with many of you over the past weeks, and I hope you will come to me with any additional thoughts, ideas, or proposals that you think our Committee should take up as part of this series.

We mark this day of remembrance just weeks after a recent spate of antisemitic attacks in New York, including an attack at a Rabbi's home during the festival of Hanukah.

It was heartening to participate in the solidarity march in New York following those attacks, and I hope we can work together with that same spirit of solidarity today.

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