



NATHAN FLETCHER

SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COSD CLERK OF THE BOARD
2023 JAN 13 AM 10:01

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: January 24, 2023

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

INSTALLATION OF A HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE EXHIBIT ON A COUNTY PROPERTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Hate crimes against the Jewish community in San Diego have been on the rise in the past two years. This troubling local and national trend has been linked to an alarming lack of public knowledge about the history of racism and bigotry against the Jewish people and the Holocaust. At the same time, there has been a well-documented rise in online hate and the proliferation of Holocaust denial conspiracy theories, coinciding with rising hate crimes.¹

Today's board action would support greater education and public understanding of the atrocities of the Holocaust and highlight the stories of San Diego survivors. Specifically, today's action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to work with the curator of Chula Vista's Holocaust Remembrance Exhibit to identify and provide space for a public Holocaust exhibit on County property within 60 days. This exhibit would then be on display for twelve months, and free for the public to experience.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER

1. Allocate \$25,000 from the Neighborhood Reinvestment Program (NRP) budget (Org 15665) to the Jewish Federation of San Diego for materials, equipment, services, and expenses related to development of the exhibit.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to work with the Jewish Federation of San Diego to identify a location and provide space for a Holocaust exhibit on County property that would be conducive to public engagement within 60 days.
3. Host the Holocaust exhibit on the identified County property for a duration of twelve months starting with an expected opening date on April 17, 2023, Yom Hashoah.
4. Find that the proposed NRP grant has a public purpose.
5. Authorize the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Financial Officer to execute a grant agreement or amendments to agreements with the Jewish Federation of San Diego

¹ [The Rise of Antisemitism Online During the Pandemic - ISD \(isdglobal.org\)](https://www.isdglobal.org/)

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County establishing terms for receipt of the funds described above and to make minor amendments to the agreement that are consistent with the general purpose of the grant but do not increase the grant.

6. Find that the allocation to the Jewish Federation of San Diego County is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that they may have significant effects on the environment.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

In 2021, the Jewish community in San Diego experienced 38 recorded incidents of antisemitism, including 14 cases of vandalism, 23 incidents of harassment, and one assault.² These antisemitic incidents represented an all-time high,³ but anti-Black and anti-Asian hate crimes also reached new highs in San Diego in 2021.⁴ The exhibit proposed in this board action aims to combat bigotry and hate by investing in greater education and understanding of the history of hate and racism towards the Jewish community and other victims of the Holocaust. The United States Institute of Peace emphasizes the role that memorialization plays in reconstructing social fabric and relations following conflict. It is important that the initiative is led by those with personal connections to the Holocaust, as well as with the San Diego community, to encourage authentic representation and meaningful engagement.⁵

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

A Holocaust Remembrance Exhibit will serve to promote a greater public appreciation for the Jewish American experience and serve as a reminder of the dangers of hate and bigotry in our community. This exhibit will support sustainability goals through an equity lens by cultivating an environment of empathy, inclusiveness, and understanding.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in Fiscal Year 2022-23 Operational Plan in Finance Other, District 4 Neighborhood Reinvestment Program (NRP). If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of \$25,000 in Fiscal Year 2022-23. The funding source is General Purpose Revenue (GPR). There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

² [Report: 'Alarming' Rise in Antisemitic Incidents in San Diego County in 2021](#)

³ <https://timesofsandiego.com/politics/2022/04/26/report-alarming-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-san-diego-county-in-2021/>

⁴ [San Diego hate crime numbers climbed higher in 2021 | KPBS Public Media](#)

⁵ <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/srs5.pdf>

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BACKGROUND

We must remember the Holocaust in order to help combat bigotry, hate, and violence of all kinds today. San Diego County can be an important partner in this effort.

In 2020, a nationwide survey showed that most young people lacked the most basic knowledge and awareness of the Holocaust.⁶ Sixty-three percent of those surveyed did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and half of the American respondents could not name a single concentration camp.⁷

At the same time, we are seeing a disturbing rise in antisemitic content on social media. In May of 2021, following news about the conflict between Israel and Hamas, a study found that there were 17,000 tweets over a week that were variations of “Hitler was right.”⁸ This came alongside Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) data on offline antisemitic incidents in May 2021 being more than double the number reported in the U.S. during the same period a year before.⁹ Antisemitic incidents reached an all-time high in the United States in 2021, with a total of 2,717 incidents of assault, harassment and vandalism reported to the Anti-Defamation League.¹⁰ In San Diego, the Jewish community experienced 38 recorded incidents of antisemitism in 2021, including 14 cases of vandalism, 23 incidents of harassment and one assault.¹¹ These antisemitic incidents represent an all-time high.¹²

Over the last year, both UC San Diego and San Diego State University campuses were vandalized and defaced with swastikas and antisemitic messages, raising safety concerns within the local Jewish community.¹³ Reports of similar antisemitic vandalism were also reported at local middle schools and high schools over the past year.¹⁴ These incidents follow the antisemitic 2019 Poway synagogue shooting, which left one dead and four others wounded.¹⁵

⁶ <https://www.claimscon.org/millennial-study/>

⁷ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/survey-finds-shocking-lack-holocaust-knowledge-among-millennials-gen-z-n1240031>

⁸ <https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/2021-online-antisemitism-report-card>

⁹ <https://www.adl.org/audit2021>

¹⁰ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-audit-finds-antisemitic-incidents-in-united-states-reached-all-time-high-in>

¹¹ <https://timesofsandiego.com/politics/2022/04/26/report-alarming-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-san-diego-county-in-2021/>

¹² <https://timesofsandiego.com/politics/2022/04/26/report-alarming-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-san-diego-county-in-2021/>

¹³ <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/jewish-students-at-uc-san-diego-on-edge-after-anti-semitic-incidents/2942952/>

¹⁴ <https://timesofsandiego.com/politics/2022/04/26/report-alarming-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-san-diego-county-in-2021/>

¹⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/27/717849871/injuries-reported-in-shooting-at-california-synagogue>

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These incidents of antisemitism are directly related to a basic lack of knowledge and general appreciation for the atrocities that occurred during the Holocaust.¹⁶ Remembering the Holocaust helps to combat bigotry, hate, and violence of all kinds in our community and around the world.

The critical work of preserving and sharing the lessons of the Holocaust is already being done by those in our community with connections to Holocaust survivors. Among them is author and educator Sandy Scheller of Chula Vista.¹⁷

At the beginning of 2020, Sandy Scheller opened “RUTH: Remember Us The Holocaust,” an exhibit that she curated, sharing the lives of the Holocaust survivors that came to San Diego County. The exhibit shares stories and messages of Holocaust survivors, those in camps, in hiding, and forced into ghettos. It uses photos, documents, and other artifacts to give visitors a sense of the lives and journeys of 13 Holocaust survivors who relocated to the South Bay.¹⁸

This regionally significant exhibit, sponsored by the Chula Vista Heritage Museum, the South Bay Historical Society, and the City of Chula Vista ended its residency at the Chula Vista Civic Center Library in August 2022. I believe in the power of this exhibit and would like to invite Sandy Scheller to curate an exhibit for a San Diego County facility to ensure that more San Diego residents are exposed to the lessons of the Holocaust. As the editorial board of the San Diego Union-Tribune wrote, exhibits like this “are invaluable windows into history — in this case, into one of the grimmest eras ever, which must be remembered so as not to be repeated. And with vibrant U.S. and Mexican Jewish communities, our border region is a perfect place.”¹⁹

The County of San Diego must invest its resources in combating antisemitism and hate incidents by promoting a deeper appreciation for the history of the Holocaust and ensuring that future generations never forget its lessons.

Among the best ways to counter hate today is to dedicate public space and resources to remembering the Holocaust.

The County of San Diego must play an active role in reminding people, especially the young people who will soon be our country's future leaders, of the consequences of bigotry, racism, and hate.

For all of these reasons, I urge your support for efforts to bring a Holocaust exhibit curated by Sandy Scheller to a suitable county property that can be appreciated by the public. The Jewish Federation of San Diego is a nonprofit organization and will facilitate bringing a Holocaust

¹⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/03/us/antisemitism-incidents-holocaust-education/index.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2022-04-27/san-diego-holocaust-museum-chula-vista>

¹⁸ <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/story/2022-04-27/permanent-museum-holocaust-san-diego-county-scheller-ruth>

¹⁹ <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/story/2022-04-27/permanent-museum-holocaust-san-diego-county-scheller-ruth>

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exhibit created by Ms. Scheller to County property. This temporary exhibit should be displayed for a period of at least twelve months in a County public location that would receive ample foot traffic and be suitable for public engagement with the curated displays. It is my intent that our existing security staff could provide on-site security services that may be needed. This exhibit would not need to be staffed.

Today's action includes the allocation of Neighborhood Reinvestment Program funding to the Jewish Federation of San Diego to help with the expenses associated with this endeavor. These funds will help support all costs associated with the development and installation of the exhibit. I have asked staff to identify a suitable county facility within 60 days, with the expectation that this facility will be open to the public in April 2023 to coincide with Yom Hashoah, a globally recognized Holocaust Memorial Day.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The proposed actions are exempt from CEQA under the "common sense" exemption because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that they may have significant effects on the environment. CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3). The proposed actions are administrative and funding actions; details of a future installation are speculative at this time, but the ultimate exhibit will be subject to CEQA as applicable for future approvals.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action to install a public Holocaust Remembrance exhibit on County property supports the Community Strategic Initiative in the County of San Diego's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan by promoting a culture of inclusivity and civic engagement through providing information that increases access for individuals or communities to use their voice and their experience to impact positive change.

Respectfully submitted,



NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

None