



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

## Against Backdrop of Ukraine Crisis and Continuing Antisemitic Hate Crimes, Senator Anna Kaplan Brings Simon Wiesenthal Center's Renowned "Courage to Remember" Holocaust Exhibition to the New York State Capital and Advocates for Better Holocaust Education

SENATOR ANNA M. KAPLAN | March 22, 2022

| ISSUE: **HOLOCAUST EDUCATION, HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN NYS, HOLOCAUST, COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM, ANTISEMITISM**



*“**Courage to Remember**” is the Simon Wiesenthal Center's 40-panel traveling exhibition on the Nazi Holocaust, which has been seen on six continents by millions of people and has proven to be an effective educational resource on this vital history. The exhibition will be on display in the Legislative*

*Office Building till Friday, March 25th.*

*A recent study shows New Yorkers aged 18-39 have shockingly poor awareness and understanding of the events of the Holocaust; with 58% unable to name a concentration camp, 19% believing that Jews caused the Holocaust, and 28% believing the Holocaust is a myth or has been exaggerated*

*Bill by Senator Anna Kaplan and Assemblywoman Nily Rozic would ensure that New York schools are teaching students about the Holocaust as required under existing law*



**>>Download event video and hi-res photographs here.<<**

ALBANY, NY (March 22nd, 2022) – Against the backdrop of the horrific invasion of Ukraine and continuing antisemitic attacks across the U.S., NYS Senator Anna Kaplan, a leading

advocate for increased Holocaust education in New York State's schools, brought the **Simon Wiesenthal Center's (SWC)** "**Courage to Remember**" exhibition on the Holocaust to the New York State Capitol.

"**Courage to Remember**" is the SWC's 40-panel traveling exhibition on the Nazi Holocaust, which has been seen on six continents by millions of people and continues to be displayed in cities across the United States and across the globe. The exhibition will be on display in the Legislative Office Building in Albany through Friday, March 25th.

**Senator Anna M. Kaplan** said "the lessons of the Holocaust are more important today than ever before, as we all watch in horror as a peaceful European nation is invaded under false pretenses, and cynically using Holocaust misinformation as an excuse to do so. It's critical that we know our history, that we learn from it, and that we ensure that "never again" isn't just a saying, but something we work to deliver. That's why I asked the Simon Wiesenthal Center to bring the "Courage to Remember" exhibition to Albany, so that everyone here can take it in and learn about this vital history, and so that we can continue to have this important dialogue around the issue of Holocaust education and how we're failing to properly teach this history here in New York."

**Lt. Governor Brian Benjamin** said "Disinformation and antisemitism are alive and well on our streets, so we must continue to send New Yorkers and the rest of the world the message: hate has no place here. Not against our Jewish siblings. Not against our Asian siblings. Not against any New Yorker—because hate is not who we are as a people. Thank you to Senator Anna Kaplan and the Simon Wiesenthal Center for bringing "Courage to Change" here to remind us remind that, though the horror of the Holocaust is unique, the root causes that led to it are things we are still fighting today."

**Rabbi Abraham Cooper**, Associate Dean, Director Global Social Action at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said “too many adults don’t know how to impart the core lessons of the Holocaust. Our kids are bombarded on Tik Tok, in online games with pro-Nazi, antisemitic messaging. We are all subject to Holocaust denial from the Iranian regime. Holocaust distortion from Putin’s propaganda machine. And the co-opting of Holocaust imagery by some anti-vaxxers. We are here today as the world watches evil unleashed against innocent children, their parents, and we see cities reduced to rubble. In order to persevere today and plan for the future we need the courage to remember our history, and that’s what this exhibition is all about, and it’s why we must do a better job of teaching this history to our next generation.”

**Senator Toby Ann Stavisky** said "Philosopher George Santayana famously wrote ‘those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’ We are seeing this in our country as antisemitic and anti-Asian violence surge, and we are seeing it overseas as tragedy unfolds in Ukraine and Putin’s excuse is denazification. I firmly believe that education is the response. Having the courage to remember is the first step toward silencing Holocaust deniers. I thank Senator Kaplan and the Simon Wiesenthal Center for bringing this impactful exhibit to our State Capital."

The exhibition is being brought to Albany days after the NYPD reported a **400% spike in antisemitic hate crimes** in NYC over the month of February. The “Courage to Remember” exhibition not only serves as a memorial for the past, but also reenforces what could transpire if the evils wrought by tyrants are left unchecked.

This exhibition has additional significance amid the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. As a pretext for Russia's invasion, President Vladimir Putin has falsely weaponized the Nazi Holocaust as a ploy to invade a peaceful neighbor and unleashed one of the worst humanitarian disasters of this century. The Russian invasion has also damaged the Babi Yar Holocaust memorial,

houses of worship, kindergartens, and schools.

During the press event, speaking on behalf of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Rabbi Cooper endorsed the efforts by Senator Kaplan to deepen and expand Holocaust education in the State. Senator Kaplan has been fighting to pass [S.121a/A.472a](#), which would provide desperately needed oversight of how the history of the Holocaust is being taught in schools around the State of New York.

[A recent study](#) by the nonprofit Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) revealed disturbing findings about Holocaust knowledge among New Yorkers ages 18-39, including that 58% cannot name a single concentration camp, 19% believe that Jews caused the Holocaust, and 28% believe the Holocaust is a myth or has been exaggerated. In each of these three metrics, New York had the worst score of any state in the US.

**Rabbi Abraham Cooper** concluded “The Courage to Remember exhibition puts a human face on the overwhelming tragedy of the Holocaust, while the events in Ukraine shed new light on the dangers of Holocaust distortion, which is a rapidly growing new variant of antisemitism. Furthermore the ‘Courage to Remember’ exhibition reinforces the importance of Holocaust education to combat efforts to erase history.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2021-S121A**

- Introduced
  - ◦ In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  - ◦ Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Authorizes the commissioner of education to conduct a survey regarding instruction on the Holocaust within the state

December 18, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Anna M. Kaplan**

Do you support this bill?