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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

STRONGLY CONDEMNING ANTI-SEMITIC ACTS

Introduced By: Senators Goldin, Miller, and Raptakis

Date Introduced: February 11, 2015

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 WHEREAS, Anti-Semitic acts committed and recorded in 2014 around the world,
2 including countries in the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, and North America, include
3 incidents of murder at Jewish sites, violent attacks and death threats against Jews, as well as gun
4 violence, arson, graffiti, anti-Semitic cartoons, and other property desecration at Jewish
5 cemeteries, places of worship, and communal activity; and

6 WHEREAS, A survey by the Anti-Defamation League of attitudes towards Jews in more
7 than 100 countries around the world, released in May 2014 found that over a quarter of the people
8 surveyed (26 percent), and nearly three quarters of those surveyed in the Middle East (74 percent)
9 hold anti-Semitic views, a stunning indicator of the stubborn resilience of anti-Semitic beliefs,
10 even in countries where few Jews reside; and

11 WHEREAS, The Anti-Defamation League survey also found that a majority of people
12 surveyed overall have either not heard of the Holocaust or do not believe it happened as has been
13 documented by factual accounts and recorded by history; and

14 WHEREAS, President Barack Obama said in his remarks at the USC Shoah Foundation
15 Dinner on May 7, 2014, ". . . if the memories of the Shoah survivors teach us anything, it is that
16 silence is evil's greatest co-conspirator. And it's up to us--each of us, every one of us--to
17 forcefully condemn any denial of the Holocaust. It's up to us to combat not only anti-Semitism,
18 but racism and bigotry and intolerance in all their forms, here and around the world. It's up to us
19 to speak out against rhetoric that threatens the existence of a Jewish homeland and to sustain
20 America's unshakeable commitment to Israel's security"; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2004, Congress passed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act, which
2 established an Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, headed by a Special Envoy to
3 Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism; and

4 WHEREAS, The United States Government has consistently supported efforts to address
5 the rise in anti-Semitism through its bilateral relationships and through engagement in
6 international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and
7 Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Organization of American States (OAS); and

8 WHEREAS, In recent decades there has been a clear and troubling pattern of increased
9 violence against Jewish persons and their property, purportedly in connection with increased
10 opposition to policies enacted by the Government of Israel; and

11 WHEREAS, During Israel's 2014 Operation Protective Edge aiming to stem the rocket
12 fire and terrorist infiltrations by Hamas, Jews and Jewish institutions and property were attacked
13 in Europe and elsewhere, including attempts to invade a synagogue in Paris, fire-bombings of
14 synagogues in France and Germany, assaults on Jewish individuals, and swastikas spray-painted
15 in a heavily Jewish area of London and also in Rome's historic Jewish quarter; and

16 WHEREAS, Anti-Semitic imagery and comparisons of Jews and Israel to Nazis have
17 been on display at demonstrations against Israel's actions in Gaza throughout the United States,
18 Europe, the Middle East and Latin America, including, placards comparing Israeli leaders to
19 Nazis, accusing Israel of carrying out a "holocaust" against Palestinians, equating the Jewish Star
20 of David with the Nazi swastika, and demonstrations that have included chants of "Death to
21 Jews", "Death to Israel", or expressions of support for suicide terrorism against Israeli or Jewish
22 civilians; and

23 WHEREAS, The Governments in France, Germany, and Italy, the three countries where
24 the majority of incidents have occurred, have strongly condemned anti-Semitism as unacceptable
25 in European society and have all made clear statements that such attacks on their Jewish
26 communities are intolerable, and they have matched those words with strong law enforcement;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, Some civil society leaders have set strong examples, including the
29 condemnation by the Union of Mosques of France, on behalf of their 500 mosques, called the
30 attacks "morally unjust and unacceptable", and stated, "nothing can justify any act that could
31 harm our Jewish compatriots, their institutions, or their places of worship"; and

32 WHEREAS, The largest newspaper in circulation in Germany, Bild, featured statements
33 against anti-Semitism from politicians, business leaders, civic leaders, media personalities and
34 celebrities with "Never Again Jew Hatred" on the front page; and

1 WHEREAS, Lawmakers at all levels have played an essential role in illustrating and
2 counteracting the resurgence of anti-Semitism worldwide; now, therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
4 hereby unequivocally condemns all forms of anti-Semitism and rejects attempts to justify anti-
5 Jewish hatred or violent attacks as an acceptable expression of disapproval or frustration over
6 political events in the Middle East or elsewhere; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby decries and condemns the comparison of Israel to
8 Nazis as an insult to the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust and an affront to those
9 who survived and their children and grandchildren, the righteous gentiles who saved Jewish lives
10 at peril to their own lives and to those who bravely fought to defeat the Nazis; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby applauds those foreign leaders who have
12 condemned anti-Semitic acts and calls on those who have yet to take firm action against anti-
13 Semitism in their countries, to do so; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby affirms its support for the mandate of the United
15 States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism as part of the broader policy priority
16 of fostering international religious freedom; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby supports expanded Holocaust educational
18 programs that increase awareness, counter prejudice, and enhance efforts to teach the universal
19 lessons of the Holocaust; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby fully supports and respectfully urges the United
21 States Secretary of State to:

22 (1) Maintain combating anti-Semitism as a United States foreign policy priority;

23 (2) Ensure that the instruments of United States public diplomacy, including the United
24 States Representative to the Organization of Islamic Conference, are utilized to effectively
25 combat anti-Semitism;

26 (3) Ensure high-level United States participation in the 2014 Organization for Security
27 and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) high level event marking the 10th anniversary of the 2004
28 OSCE Berlin Declaration against anti-Semitism;

29 (4) Urge governments to ensure that adequate laws are in place to punish anti-Semitic
30 violence against persons and property;

31 (5) Continue robust United States reporting on anti-Semitism by the Department of State
32 and the Special Envoy to Combat and Monitor Anti-Semitism;

33 (6) Provide necessary training and instruction for personnel posted in United States
34 embassies and missions to analyze and report on anti-Semitic violence against persons and

1 property as well as the response of governments to those incidents;

2 (7) Ensure that United States Government efforts to train law enforcement personnel and
3 prosecutors abroad incorporate tools to address anti-Semitic violence against persons and
4 property; and

5 (8) Strongly support the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's
6 specialized efforts to monitor and address anti-Semitism, including through support for its law
7 enforcement and civil society training programs; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
9 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, the
10 Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States, the Jewish Federation of Rhode
11 Island, and the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island.

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