



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE • BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

John Mirisch, Mayor

February 14, 2020

Senator Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Cosponsor S. 852, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2019

Dear Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I urge you to cosponsor S. 852, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2019, sponsored by Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina. This important measure extends protections of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to groups who share a common faith and includes the definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the Department of State.

Over the last several years, the number of anti-Semitic crimes has risen worldwide, even as we remember the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In a January 2020 Chicago Tribune article, the author noted Los Angeles had 58 anti-Semitic hate crimes in the first 10 months of 2019, compared with 29 over the same period in 2018. Additionally, there has been an 86 percent increase in reported anti-Semitic incidents at colleges and universities.

Locally, the Nessah Synagogue in Beverly Hills had a person force entry into the Synagogue on December 14, 2019. The suspect heavily ransacked the interior, overturned furniture, and damaged several Jewish relics, including Torahs, scrolls, and prayer books. Additionally, the suspect took possession of the Synagogue's printed materials and scattered them throughout the interior. The disruption was primarily to the Synagogue's interior contents, and there was limited structural damage. The person has since been arrested and charged with vandalism, commercial burglary, and a penalty enhancement for a hate crime.

Other anti-Semitic attacks in the United States in December 2019 include five people who were stabbed during a Hanukkah celebration in Monsey, New York; four people killed in a shooting at a New Jersey grocery store; and a Brooklyn woman hit in the head as she walked with her child.

S. 852, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2019 represents a responsible step in establishing a definition of anti-Semitism for the enforcement of Federal antidiscrimination law concerning education programs and activities. We strongly urge you to considering cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

John A. Mirisch
Mayor