



September 15, 2026

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman,

On behalf of American Jewish Committee (AJC), I write in support of the *Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park Establishment Act* ([H.R.1031](#)), which was introduced by Representatives Claudia Tenney (R-NY) and Tom Suozzi (D-NY).

AJC has long maintained that preserving and teaching the history of the Holocaust is essential to combating antisemitism and strengthening our collective national memory. [AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report](#) underscores the stakes: Americans with greater knowledge about the Holocaust are much more likely to recognize antisemitism and to see it as a problem. Establishing permanent, federally supported sites of memory and education, like the one this bill would create, helps address these knowledge gaps and equips future generations with the historical grounding needed to recognize and resist antisemitism.

The *Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park Establishment Act* establishes the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park as part of the National Park System. This follows the National Park Service's 2024 Special Resource Study, which confirmed that the site meets the criteria of national significance, suitability, feasibility, and the need for NPS management. Fort Ontario was the only Jewish refugee shelter in the United States during World War II, housing 982 refugees from 18 countries between August 1944 and February 1946. The federal government has a responsibility to ensure that nationally significant Holocaust history, including the story of America's response to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution, is properly preserved, honored, and interpreted for the benefit of present and future generations.

AJC urges the Committee to favorably report the bill during its upcoming markup and looks forward to its advancement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Bernton". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Jessica Bernton
Director, Congressional Affairs
American Jewish Committee