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**SCHAKOWSKY, WAXMAN LEAD CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT TO FORCE INSURANCE COMPANIES TO PAY HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS RIGHTFUL CLAIMS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - During a Congressional hearing today, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) said that Congress must pass legislation to force insurance companies to pay Holocaust survivors their rightful claims. The hearing was held in the Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Efficiency, Intergovernmental Relations, and Financial Management, of which Schakowsky is the top Democrat, to consider H.R. 2693, the Holocaust Victims Insurance Relief Act. U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA), Ranking Democrat on the Full Government Reform Committee, is the chief sponsor of the legislation.

"With the assistance of major insurance companies, some of which operate in the United States today, the Nazi regime took over and liquidated policies held by Jews that were killed, sent to concentration camps, and forced into slave labor," said Schakowsky, whose Congressional District includes Skokie, home to one of the largest concentrations of survivors in the country.

Schakowsky expressed the frustration of her constituents who have been denied access to valuable information from insurance companies.

"Besides the reprehensible foot dragging and refusal to accept responsibility for the shameful actions of their executives or their government during the Nazi era, Holocaust era policy writers have to date not provided victims or heirs access to lists of those policies they wrote during that time period. I have had scores of constituents contact me with questions, dismayed that the process has gone on for so long and they are still without answers or justice," Schakowsky said.

H.R. 2693 would require disclosure to the U.S. Department of Commerce critical information, including names and places of birth listed on all life, dowry, education and property insurance, about policies that were in effect in all regions under Nazi control between 1933 and 1945. In addition the bill requires the disclosure of the name of the company that issued the policy and the name of the company responsible for those policies today. The information would be made public through a registry operated by the National Archives. Another important provision of the bill is the enforcement mechanism: \$5,000 a day for noncompliance.

"Congress must send a loud, clear and long overdue message to companies that do business in the United States. Unless they agree to stop their dilatory and evasive tactics, own up to their shameful past, and provide needed information to the public, they should not expect to reap the large profits they have come to enjoy from their customers in this country. HR 2693 would accomplish the goal of convincing

**insurance companies with unmet obligations to Holocaust survivors that they are better off cooperating," Schakowsky concluded.**