

February 13, 2001

**MEMBERS OF CONGRESS URGE PRESIDENT BUSH TO APPOINT HOLOCAUST ENVOY**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Louise Slaughter (D-NY), and Martin Frost (D-TX) joined with 51 Members of Congress yesterday in letters urging President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell to maintain a high-level commitment to the issue of Holocaust restitution.**

**Representative Schakowsky said, "It is imperative that the Bush administration continue the U.S. commitment to securing some measure of justice for those who suffered in the Holocaust and to the families of those who perished."**

**Representative Waxman added, "The United States must stay engaged to ensure that the recently negotiated Holocaust settlements provide fair and expedient restitution to the victims. There are critical issues that must still be addressed."**

**The settlements were sought by the United States to enable survivors to reclaim stolen Holocaust era insurance policies and bank accounts, and receive compensation for slave labor, without having to go to court. There is concern, however, that a lack of oversight and enforcement could leave survivors cheated of the redress they are due.**

**For example, the DM 10 billion German Foundation established in June 2000 is still underfunded, no slave labor reparations have been paid out, and the majority of those seeking to reclaim Holocaust era insurance policies are being rejected. Furthermore, European insurance companies are gaining immunity from litigation in U.S. courts even though many have failed to comply with the basic claims approval standards of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), or its requirements to publish names on dormant accounts.**

**The deadline to file for slave labor payments is August 11, 2001 and the deadline to submit an insurance claim is January 31, 2002.**

**The letters call upon President Bush to appoint an envoy on Holocaust issues and request that Secretary Powell maintains the Office of Holocaust Issues at the State Department. These recommendations were also among those presented by the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, which issued its report on January 16, 2001.**