



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2019

View online

Governor Wolf Calls Upon Pennsylvanians to Stop Bigotry During Civic Holocaust Commemoration

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today joined Holocaust survivors, their families, and community members in the annual civic Holocaust commemoration, offering the following remarks and calling on Pennsylvanians to end bigotry, antisemitism, and white nationalism through their words and actions:

“Thank you to everyone for being here today, especially our Holocaust survivors and their families. I’ve had the honor of speaking at this event almost each year I’ve been in Harrisburg, but this year is different because I stand here today as the governor of a commonwealth that suffered a tragic and despicable antisemitic attack six months ago.

“A man driven by a distorted and bigoted agenda murdered 11 innocent people as they worshipped inside the Tree of Life Synagogue. He murdered them because of how they worshipped. He murdered them because of his irrational bigotry. He murdered them because of a hateful heart.

“On this day, we remember with unique clarity the Holocaust, and we understand that the Holocaust was not simply a function of the time or place. It was a function of humanity’s age-old and inexplicable capacity to embrace ideologies of hatred and exclusion.

“Obviously we know now that growth and development stem from fairness and inclusion. This was true of so many people in Nazi Germany. It’s still all too true today. It was as stupid then as it is now. Bigotry advances no one. It advances no place.

“And yet, this bigotry exists here in America right now as the Tree of Life attack so horribly shows. A bigotry rooted in ignorance and hate. It’s become standard to look back on the Holocaust and ask, “Why didn’t the Germans do anything to stop it?”

“Well, here we are, facing our own antisemitism, our own bigotry, our own hate, and we need to ask ourselves, “What are we going to do to stop it?”

“Because we’re not facing just one evil man who callously murdered 11 people because of their faith. We’re facing many instances of this kind of intolerance. We’ve seen Jewish gravestones vandalized, including right here in Pennsylvania. We’ve seen Neo-Nazis marching, carrying Nazi flags, chanting “Blood and Soil”. We’ve seen antisemitic tropes become part of the vernacular, and we’ve seen an endless number of antisemitic theories promoted online.

“This weekend, a bigot attacked innocent worshipers, killing one, at a synagogue in Poway, California.

“Enough is enough! We need to step up and end this behavior before it becomes normalized.

“We need to stand together and proclaim that this hatred and bigotry is not who we are. Not as Pennsylvanians, not as Americans, not as human beings.

“That’s in part what we’re doing with this commemoration today.

“I want to thank the survivors of the Holocaust and their families for sharing their stories, especially those who are present today: Survivor Bluma Shapiro, of York; Survivor Linda Schwab, of Harrisburg; Jack Kay, who is here in memory of Emma Kay, of Philadelphia; Raymond Rosen, who is here in memory of Sam Rosen, of Scranton; and State Representative Mike Schlossberg, who is here in memory of Harry and Helen Herzberg, of Brooklyn.

“Your strength gives us hope that we can find a path out of this darkness, that we can end antisemitism, racism, neo-Nazism, white nationalism, and all forms of bigotry once and for all.

“Let us honor you by rededicating ourselves to the noble and never-ending task of ensuring that tolerance, mutual respect and inclusion triumph over hatred, bigotry and exclusionism. Let us give real meaning to the words “Never again.”

NOTE: Video, audio, and photos from the event will be available for download in an email from the Pennsylvania Internet News Service (PINS). To register for PINS emails contact cms@pacast.com

MEDIA CONTACT: JJ Abbott, 717.783.1116

###