

November 11, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid  
Speaker of the House Paul Ryan  
House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We write to you to express our strong support for, and to urge prompt consideration of, S.2763 and H.R. 6130, *The Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016*, (The HEAR Act). The HEAR Act creates a uniform national statute of limitations rule for claims to Nazi-confiscated artwork. The bill provides that existing legal claims should not be denied simply because of the passage of time, especially if the claimant did not have actual knowledge of the artwork's location and the facts necessary to make a claim. To be clear, The HEAR Act will not create a new cause of action.

The United States has been committed to assisting with the restitution of Nazi-era confiscated artwork for over 70 years and passage of The HEAR Act is a critical next step in upholding the commitment of the United States to the Washington Conference Principles. Just like the prosecution of genocide should never be barred by statute of limitations, in the same manner works of art and valued property taken during a campaign of genocide should be deemed as forever tainted. These works of art need to be restituted without further delay to their rightful owners. No one has the right to benefit from the crimes committed as part and parcel of the horrifying campaign to eliminate the Jews of Europe.

In the United States, statutes of limitations and other procedural bars have prevented restitution cases from being heard on the merits. The HEAR Act helps to insure that the doors of our courthouses are not closed to Holocaust victims who – were it not for the passage of time – would otherwise be able to have their cases heard on the merits. Due to the extreme nature of these cases, we firmly believe the moral principle upon which our judicial system is based requires that these victims be given the opportunity to have their cases heard.

Accordingly, we strongly support The HEAR Act and urge its prompt enactment before the end of this Congress.

Sincerely,

American Jewish Committee  
B'nai B'rith International  
Commission for Art Recovery  
World Jewish Congress  
World Jewish Restitution Organization