

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

1540 Kuser Road, Suite A9
Hamilton, NJ 08619-3828
(609) 585-7878
TTY (609) 585-3650

108 Lacey Road, Suite 38A
Whiting, NJ 08759-1331
(732) 350-2300

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



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**Denouncing the Murderous Attack on the
Holocaust Memorial Museum**
Excerpts by Rep. Chris Smith
June 12, 2009

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the Africa Subcommittee, I joined several colleagues at an important Foreign Affairs Committee meeting with Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai of Zimbabwe.

It was an extraordinary opportunity to discuss Zimbabwe's progress towards democracy and away from dictatorship, hyper-inflation, and multiple health crises, including cholera—and obtain a fuller understanding of what additional steps the U.S. can take to help.

That meeting, however, occurred at precisely the same time the House considered H.Res. 529, a resolution condemning the June 10th violent attack on the Holocaust Memorial Museum—a despicable anti-Semitic act that killed Officer Stephen Tyrone Johns. As so eloquently articulated by many colleagues yesterday, I—we—salute officer Johns for his bravery and courage and extend our deepest condolences to his family.

I rise today to not only express my support for H Res 529 but also to thank my friend and colleague Mr. Klein for introducing it and for including me as a co-sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, the Holocaust Memorial Museum is a noble and vitally necessary attempt to remember and honor the victims of the Holocaust. The memorial itself is a witness to truth and promotion of human dignity and tolerance.

Wednesday's attack on that museum by a crazed, hate-filled gunman is yet another chilling reminder that our society still harbors a dangerous collection of bigots and racists who hate Jews.

Unparalleled since the dark days of the Second World War, Jewish communities around the world are facing violent attacks against synagogues, Jewish cultural sites, cemeteries and individuals. Anti-Semitism is an ugly reality that won't go away by ignoring or wishing it away. It must be combated with resolve and tenacity.

The sad deeply troubling reality is that James von Brunn cannot be dismissed as an aberration, but is connected to a whole hate-promoting movement that results in violence against Jews in America and around the world on practically a daily basis.

The Anti-Defamation League recently issued its annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents. While the ADL is to be congratulated for its careful research on an unpleasant but absolutely necessary subject, the ugly facts that the report documents make for painful reading.

In 2008, the ADL noted 1,352 reported incidents of vandalism, harassment, and physical assaults on Jewish people or Jewish-owned property nationwide.

Sadly and shamefully, my own state of New Jersey had more reported anti-Semitic incidents—238--than any other state.

But the attack on the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Mr. Speaker, is the most ominous aspect of this wave of evil. The Holocaust Memorial Museum is a unique institution. It is a memorial, a museum, a center of Holocaust scholarship, and a promoter of tolerance and preventer of genocide. It is a very powerful symbol of the solidarity of America with those murdered in the Holocaust, and with the Jewish people.

Mr. Speaker, at this critical moment we need government officials at all levels to denounce, without hesitation or delay, every anti-Semitic act wherever and whenever it occurs. No exceptions. At this moment, not to speak out enables the purveyors of hate. They never take a holiday or grow weary, nor should we.

Just as Mr. Brunn attacked the Holocaust Memorial Museum and murdered a courageous security officer tasked with its protection, Holocaust remembrance and tolerance education must dramatically expand, and we need to ensure that our respective laws punish those who hate and incite violence against Jews.

Finally, if we are to protect our children from the evil of anti-Semitism, we must re-educate ourselves and systematically educate our children. While that starts in our homes, the classroom must be the incubator of tolerance. It seems to me that only the most hardened racist can remain unmoved by Holocaust education and remembrance. Only the most crass, evil, and prejudiced among us can study the horrors of the Holocaust and not cry out: Never again!