

Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Gene Herman
609-777-2600

RELEASE: October 20, 1998

**GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION EXEMPTING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS'
SETTLEMENT INCOME FROM STATE INCOME TAXES**

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed legislation granting Holocaust survivors and their heirs an exemption on state income taxes for restitution and compensation received for losses suffered by Holocaust survivors during World War II. The legislation also stipulates that the Holocaust survivors' settlement income will not be considered in determining eligibility for the state Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) program.

"There is little we can do for the survivors of the Nazi nightmare, or their families," the Governor said. "But this legislation takes a step in the right direction. It gives us one small way to address the horrors of the Holocaust."

"We must always keep alive the memory of what was the worst mass murder in history," she said. "We must keep it alive so that our sons and daughters will know that the Holocaust did happen and could happen again if we choose to accept or ignore bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance."

"The Nazis confiscated everything from their victims, from artwork to wedding rings to insurance policies," Gov. Whitman said. "And what they looted they asked others to hide."

"We must stop the hiding," the Governor said. "We must uncover the assets that rightfully belong to Holocaust victims, survivors, and their families. We cannot allow anyone, anywhere, to profit from the Nazi plunder."

According to Gov. Whitman, 4,485 of the 370,000 Holocaust survivors worldwide live in New Jersey. In August, Swiss banks agreed to address the claims of the Holocaust survivors and to pay a settlement of \$1.25 billion. This settlement, to be paid out over three years, settles lawsuits by survivors whose bank accounts had been lost or plundered during World War II.

"We want to ensure justice for the survivors in New Jersey who will receive their part of this settlement," Gov. Whitman said. "For decades, these survivors have been denied what is rightfully theirs. And we don't want their settlement -- whatever it is -- to be reduced by taxes."

The Governor said that during the second World War far too many people acted as collaborators, perpetrators, and bystanders in the Holocaust, without protesting or resisting.

"The roads to the concentration camps were built by hate, but paved with indifference" she said. "But we can still wage the battle against tyranny and indifference. One way we can do this is through education. And New Jersey can be proud that it has one of the most comprehensive Holocaust education programs in

the country."

The education program was the result of the Holocaust Education Act, which Gov. Whitman signed in 1994. This landmark legislation made New Jersey the first state to require public schools to teach students about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide.

A-1981, the legislation granting the state tax exemption on Holocaust survivors' settlement income, was sponsored by Assembly Members Joel M. Weingarten (R-Essex/Union) and Kevin J. O'Toole (R-Essex/Union) and Senators Joseph M. Kyrillos, Jr. (R- Middlesex/Monmouth) and Diane B. Allen (R-Burlington/Camden).