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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### AB 644 (Gabriel) - Exposition Park: Holocaust memorial

**Version:** July 1, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** August 18, 2025

**Policy Vote:** N.R. & W. 7 - 0, G.O. 15 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Ashley Ames

**Bill Summary:** This bill would authorize, upon an appropriation by the Legislature, a nonprofit organization that represents victims and survivors of the Holocaust, in consultation with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the Department of General Services (DGS), to plan, construct, and maintain a memorial to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust at Exposition Park, as specified.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

- One-time General Fund cost pressures of \$5.5 million for the Legislature to appropriate funding to facilitate CNRA's design and construction of a Holocaust memorial and \$3.2 million annual ongoing cost pressures to support maintenance, security, and mitigation.

**Background:** Of approximately 12,000 Californians who are survivors of the systematic extermination of six million Jews by Nazi Germany during World War II, commonly known as the Holocaust, approximately 10,000 live in Southern California. The Desert Holocaust Memorial is the closest memorial to Los Angeles and the only public monument in the region. A number of monuments exist to honor other communities throughout Los Angeles, such as the Armenian Genocide Martyrs Memorial in Montebello, dedicated after the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide; the Bracero Monument, commissioned by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Department and dedicated in 2019; and the Los Angeles Holodomor-Genocide Monument at Grand Park dedicated after the 50th anniversary of the genocide in Ukraine, commissioned by the Ukraine American Community of LA. However, there is no official California State Holocaust Memorial.

Nonprofit organizations in California often collaborate with the CNRA to establish memorials that reflect cultural heritage, historical events, and environmental values. Grants or land-use agreements typically facilitate such partnerships and they must follow specific state regulations to ensure responsible stewardship of public resources. A prominent example is the development of the Joshua Tree Cultural Center in Twentynine Palms, built with \$2 million in state funds. The center serves as both a memorial and educational hub for the Chemehuevi and Serrano (San Manuel) Bands of Mission Indians, preserving and presenting artifacts and tribal history.

**Proposed Law:** This bill:

- 1) Authorizes, upon appropriation by the Legislature, a nonprofit organization that represents victims and survivors of the Holocaust, in consultation with CNRA and

DGS, to plan, construct, and maintain a memorial to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust at Exposition Park, as specified.

- 2) Defines “Exposition Park” to mean the Sixth District Agricultural Association, and shall also be known as the Office of Exposition Park Management.
- 3) Authorizes CNRA, consistent with funding and the authority provided in the annual budget, to enter into a non-competitive grant with a nonprofit organization, subject to the provisions of this bill.
- 4) Requires the memorial to be consistent with the operating policies and procedures of the Office of Exposition Park Management, including the location of the memorial.
- 5) Requires DGS, in consultation with the nonprofit organization and CNRA, to do all of the following:
  - a) Review the preliminary design plans to identify potential maintenance concerns.
  - b) Review and approve any documents prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.
  - c) Review final construction documents to ensure that the documents comply with applicable laws.
  - d) Inspect all construction performed by the contractors selected by the nonprofit organization.
- 6) Requires the nonprofit organization, in consultation with the Office of Exposition Park Management and with the approval of CNRA and DGS, to do all of the following:
  - a) Prepare the right-of-entry permit outlining the final area of work, final construction documents, construction plans, the contractor hired to perform the work, insurance, bonding, provisions for damage to state property, and inspection requirements.
  - b) Prepare an agreement for the long-term maintenance and security of the memorial.

**Related Legislation:**

SB 472 (Stern, 2025) requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program to provide direct allocations to local education agencies for the purposes of providing Holocaust and genocide education and professional training.

SB 537 (Becker, Chapter 859, Statutes of 2024) authorizes a nonprofit that represents Mexican Americans or Mexican immigrants to enter into negotiations with DGS to plan, construct, and maintain a memorial to Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants who were forcibly deported from the United States during the Great Depression, as specified.

SB 1277 (Stern, Chapter 890, Statutes of 2023) establishes the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, to establish a statewide professional development program on genocide for school district, county office of education, and charter school teachers.

SB 1407 (Nguyen, Chapter 256, Statutes of 2024) authorizes a nonprofit organization representing victims of survivors of communism, in consultation with DGS, to construct and maintain a monument to the victims and survivors of communism on the grounds of the State Capitol, as specified.

AB 1350 (Soria, Chapter 684, Statutes of 2023) created the Capitol Park Veterans Memorial Fund, to be administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the purpose of the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing veterans memorials in the State Capitol.

AB 298 (Mathis, Chapter 299, Statutes of 2023) authorized a nonprofit organization that represents blind veterans to plan, construct, and maintain a Braille American flag to serve as a monument to the blind veterans of California and the United States in the California State Capitol Building, as specified.

AB 1452 (Mathis, Chapter 371, Statutes of 2023) authorized the construction and maintenance of a monument to the veterans of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait on the grounds of the State Capitol, as specified.

AB 1459 (Ramos, Chapter 690, Statutes of 2023) required that any construction, restoration, rehabilitation, renovation, or reconstruction of the State Capitol Building Annex incorporate a mural honoring Native Americans in California in one of the main hearing rooms.

AB 1762 (Mathis, Chapter 205, Statutes of 2022) authorized the construction and maintenance of a monument to the Gold Star Families of California on the grounds of the State Capitol, as specified.

AB 2704 (Gipson, Chapter, Statutes of 2016) authorized the construction and maintenance of a bust in the State Capitol Building Annex to honor Mervyn M. Dymally.

AB 2790 (Nazarian, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2016) authorizes the construction of a memorial to California's genocide survivors in the Capitol Historic Region. The actual construction of the memorial may not proceed without the prior approve of DGS and the Capitol Park Master Plan Group.

AB 2358 (Hagman, Chapter 682, Statutes of 2012) authorized the construction of a memorial in the State Capitol Building Annex to honor former Governor and United State President, Ronald Reagan.

AB 2767 (W. Brown, Chapter 1757, Statutes of 1984) created the Historic State Capitol Commission to review and hold limited management over specified aspects of the State Capitol, as specified.