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THIRD READING

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Bill No: AB 644  
Author: Gabriel (D) and Bauer-Kahan (D), et al.  
Amended: 7/1/25 in Senate  
Vote: 21

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SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/24/25  
AYES: Limón, Seyarto, Allen, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Stern

SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORG. COMMITTEE: 15-0, 7/8/25  
AYES: Padilla, Valladares, Archuleta, Ashby, Blakespear, Cervantes, Dahle,  
Hurtado, Jones, Ochoa Bogh, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Wahab,  
Weber Pierson

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25  
AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25 - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Exposition Park: Holocaust memorial

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This bill, upon appropriation by the Legislature, authorizes a nonprofit organization that represents victims and survivors of the Holocaust, in consultation with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), the Legislature, 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.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Prescribes various duties for DGS in connection with development and maintenance for the park around the State Capitol Building and state properties through the State of California.

- 2) Establishes CNRA, composed of departments, boards, conservancies, and commissions responsible for the restoration, protection, and management of the state's natural and cultural resources.
- 3) Establishes, within CNRA, the Sixth District Agricultural Association, known as Exposition Park.

This bill, upon appropriation:

- 1) Authorizes a nonprofit organization that represents victims and survivors of the Holocaust, in consultation with CNRA, the Legislature, and DGS to plan, construct, and maintain a memorial to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust at Exposition Park, defined as the Sixth District Agricultural Association and also known as the Office of Exposition Park Management.
- 2) Requires the memorial to be consistent with the operating policies and procedures of the Office of Exposition Park Management and requires the office to consult with the Legislature for any issues that may arise between the planning and design of the memorial and the operating policies and procedures of Exposition Park.
- 3) 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 all applicable laws.
  - d) Inspect all construction performed by the contractor selected by the nonprofit organization pursuant to these provisions.
- 4) Requires the nonprofit organization, in consultation with the Office of Exposition Park Management and the Legislature, and with approval of CNRA and DGS, to:
  - 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.

## **Background**

*Holocaust Memorials in California.* California is home to numerous Holocaust memorials that honor the memory of victims and educate the public about the atrocities of the Holocaust. In San Francisco, one of the most striking memorials is the Holocaust Memorial at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, an outdoor sculpture by George Segal depicting a scene reminiscent of Buchenwald's liberation. Nearby, the Holocaust Center of Northern California provides education and survivor testimony, while the Pink Triangle Park in the Castro District is the first permanent U.S. memorial dedicated to LGBTQ+ victims of the Nazis. Other sites in the Bay Area include smaller memorials at Eternal Home Cemetery and Salem Memorial Park in Colma, and the Never Again Holocaust Memorial in Los Gatos. In Oakland, synagogues such as Beth Jacob Congregation and Temple Sinai also feature memorials and commemorative sculptures.

In Los Angeles, major institutions such as the Museum of Tolerance and the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust serve as central hubs for education, remembrance, and community dialogue. Additional memorials in the city include sculptures at Cedars-Sinai Hospital and the Sondra Smalley Family Sculpture Garden, as well as the USC Shoah Foundation, which holds one of the world's largest collections of survivor video testimonies.

Southern California is also home to several poignant memorials. In Palm Desert, the Desert Holocaust Memorial features life-sized bronze figures in a public park setting. San Diego hosts a memorial sculpture garden at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center (JCC) in La Jolla, and similar installations can be found at other local Jewish community centers. In Irvine, the Nancy and Irving Chase Family Holocaust Memorial Garden provides a quiet space for reflection at the Merage JCC.

Elsewhere in the state, memorials can be found at the Home of Peace Cemetery in Sacramento, Temple Sholom in Ontario, and the Holocaust and Genocide Memorial Grove at Sonoma State University.

*Exposition Park.* Exposition Park, legally known as the Sixth District Agricultural Association (SDAA), is a California state entity under CNRA. Located in South Los Angeles, the park spans approximately 160 acres and serves as a major cultural, educational, and recreational hub. It is home to prominent institutions such as the California Science Center, which includes the Space Shuttle Endeavour, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the California African American Museum, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, BMO Stadium, and a historic rose garden.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, there will be “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.”

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 8/29/25)

Hadassah

Holocaust Museum LA

JCC/Federation of San Luis Obispo

JCRC Bay Area

Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles

Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund

Jewish Community Relations Council, Sacramento

Jewish Community Relations Council, Santa Barbara

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Long Beach and Orange County

Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties

Jewish Family Service LA

Jewish Family Service of the Desert

Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley

Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara

Jewish Federation of Orange County

Jewish Federation of San Diego

Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys

Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region

Jewish Long Beach

Jewish Public Affairs Committee  
National Council of Jewish Women-SF  
Simon Wiesenthal Center and Museums of Tolerance

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 8/29/25)

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author, “[w]e are now living in a world where the last generation of Holocaust survivors are quickly passing away, and a generation of young Americans are deeply unfamiliar with the lessons of the genocide against our people. In this moment, California must stand up for our community and our values as a state. The Holocaust is both millions of individual traumas, and also a lasting collective trauma for the Jewish people; we must unequivocally express our collective responsibility as a state to never forget, and commit to the promise: ‘never again.’”

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR:** 79-0, 6/2/25

**AYES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

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