
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8023

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Kline, Jacobsen and Prentice

Read first time 04/04/2005. Referred to Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE WASHINGTON STATE
5 CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, AND TO THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE RELEVANT
6 COMMITTEES OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, AND TO THE FIVE NAIC MEMBER
7 STATES ON ICHEIC, AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NAIC INTERNATIONAL
8 HOLOCAUST COMMISSION TASK FORCE, AND TO THE SPECIAL ENVOY FOR HOLOCAUST
9 ISSUES OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND TO THE CHAIRMAN OF
10 ICHEIC:

11 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
12 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
13 represent and petition as follows:

14 WHEREAS, The International Commission of Holocaust-Era Insurance
15 Claims (ICHEIC) was established in 1998 by the National Association of
16 Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), six European insurance companies,
17 several Jewish organizations, and the government of Israel to create "a
18 just process that will expeditiously address the issue of unpaid
19 insurance policies issued to victims of the Holocaust"; and

1 WHEREAS, ICHEIC has received over eighty thousand eligible claims
2 worldwide; and

3 WHEREAS, ICHEIC is scheduled to complete the processing of all
4 claims by December 2005, with all appeals to be concluded by the middle
5 of 2006; and

6 WHEREAS, With a majority of all claims still reported by ICHEIC as
7 unresolved, much of ICHEIC's work remains undone; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1999, the Washington Legislature unanimously passed the
9 Holocaust Victims Insurance Relief Act thereby establishing the
10 Washington State Holocaust Survivors Assistance Office in the Office of
11 the Insurance Commissioner; and

12 WHEREAS, One hundred ninety-five Washington State residents have
13 filed seven hundred sixty-two Holocaust-era insurance claims with
14 ICHEIC through the Washington State Holocaust Survivors Assistance
15 Office; and

16 WHEREAS, To date, nineteen Washington claimants have received
17 offers on thirty-one claims, and an additional fifty-two claimants have
18 received humanitarian fund payments; and

19 WHEREAS, The Washington State Insurance Commissioner holds a seat
20 on the International Holocaust Task Force of the NAIC; and

21 WHEREAS, In October 2004, the Washington State Holocaust Survivors
22 Assistance Office issued an updated status report on the Holocaust
23 insurance settlement process focusing on the performance of ICHEIC
24 itself in overseeing and managing the claims process; and

25 WHEREAS, The Office of the Insurance Commissioner's report
26 concluded that, despite measurable progress in resolving some claims,
27 significant unresolved problems continue to plague the process,
28 including missing claims, disqualified claims, and claims that will
29 never be fully investigated by ICHEIC; and

30 WHEREAS, The Office of the Insurance Commissioner has recommended
31 that an independent performance audit of ICHEIC be conducted to
32 determine the extent to which ICHEIC has correctly implemented its own
33 policies and procedures and is meeting its mandate in a fair, credible,
34 transparent, and accountable fashion; and

35 WHEREAS, In the absence of formal oversight by any judicial,
36 legislative, or other governmental body, it is both prudent and
37 responsible that a complex claims settlement process such as that

1 administered by ICHEIC should be subjected to an independent
2 performance audit; and

3 WHEREAS, Washington State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler has
4 called upon his fellow United States Insurance Commissioners to support
5 his recommendation for a performance audit of ICHEIC as consistent with
6 their roles as original signatories of the agreement creating ICHEIC;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The Government Reform Committee of the United States House
9 of Representatives has three times held public hearings on the status
10 and performance of ICHEIC, and identified improvements to the process
11 to ensure that ICHEIC is accountable to its stakeholders; and

12 WHEREAS, The Washington State Legislature supports Insurance
13 Commissioner Kreidler in his call for a performance audit of ICHEIC as
14 consistent with the original purpose of the Holocaust Victims Insurance
15 Relief Act of 1999;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
17 International Commission on Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims authorize
18 and support an independent audit of its performance; and

19 Your Memorialists further pray that appropriate committees of the
20 United States Congress review the status of the Holocaust insurance
21 claims process, and support, in consultation with the United States
22 Department of State, appropriate legislative and nonlegislative
23 remedies to expedite unresolved claims, including an independent
24 performance audit of ICHEIC; and

25 Your Memorialists further pray that other state legislatures will
26 join our call and urge their states' Insurance Commissioners to support
27 Commissioner Kreidler's call for an audit of ICHEIC; and

28 Your Memorialists further pray that the Washington State Insurance
29 Commissioner utilize his position on the NAIC International Holocaust
30 Commission Task Force to further the intent of this Memorial.

31 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
32 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United
33 States, the Washington State Congressional Delegation, the Chairpersons
34 of the relevant Committees of the United States Congress, the five NAIC
35 member states on ICHEIC, the members of the NAIC International
36 Holocaust Commission Task Force, the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues
37 of the United States Department of State, and the Chairman of ICHEIC,

1 the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of
2 Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of
3 Washington.

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