



Tom Lantos

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER**

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Lantos Applauds White House Signing of Congressional Anti-Semitism Bill

Washington, DC – Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA), the ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, today welcomed the signing into law this weekend of a bill that he had championed to respond to the recent surge in anti-Semitism worldwide.

"Despite unreasoning opposition from some quarters, the Administration has supported this important legislation," Lantos said. "Weaker bills had been proposed, and those could have easily passed, but they would not have been up to the task of combating the insidious rise in anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions in Europe, Asia and elsewhere. This new law provides some much-needed spine-stiffening to our diplomats' efforts."

Using his own legislation as a basis, last month Lantos managed to toughen key provisions of a bill by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Senator George Voinovich (R-OH), the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act. As amended by Lantos, the resulting law now requires the Secretary of State to establish a permanent Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and requires the State Department to collect data on acts of anti-Semitism around the world which will be highlighted each year in annual human rights reports.

After Congress passed the legislation last week, the State Department renewed the objections to the Lantos provisions that originally had been stated in an unsigned memo sent to Lantos in July. The Department had claimed that creating an office to monitor and fight anti-Semitism would "diminish credibility" and show "favoritism" and "imbalance" in U.S. human rights policy.

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