

**From:** [Elizabeth Jones](#)  
**To:** [Janet Wood](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 8:10:04 AM

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From: sunset@sunset.texas.gov On Behalf Of Texas Sunset Commission  
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 7:52:43 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada)  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE COMMISSION

First Name: Janice

Last Name: Teplitz

Title: President

Organization you are affiliated with: Congregation Havurah Shalom

Email:

City: GEORGETOWN, TX

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

Congregation Havurah Shalom, a Jewish congregation of nearly 300 members in Georgetown, Texas, is pleased to submit the following comments in support of the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission (THGC), which is currently undergoing Sunset review.

According to the FBI's annual Hate Crimes Statistics report, 7,314 hate crimes were recorded in 2019; a 3% increase over the previous year and the highest number recorded since 2008. The report, which includes both violent and nonviolent crimes such as vandalism, listed 51 hate crime related murders – more than double the number reported in 2018. In Texas, the number of hate crimes rose nearly 240% between 2017 and 2018, from 192 to 457.

These alarming statistics underscore the continued need, and even, perhaps, an expanded role for the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission. As the Texas Sunset Review Commission considers the future of the THGC, we ask that you reflect on just a few of the ways in which they are making a difference in how intolerance, bullying and prejudice is addressed in our communities.

**Childhood Education:** The THGC offers regional workshops and educational programs to school aged children that connect bullying and intolerance to past atrocities and help the children better understand and accept the differences in us all. It is critical, in our opinion, that such educational events are offered to children before they have formed unalterable prejudices for those who are different from them.

**Speakers Bureau and Adult Programs:** The THGC offers adult programs featuring well-respected lecturers on topical issues that are not readily available elsewhere.

**Holocaust Memorial Week:** The THGC is the only organization in Texas that serves as a reliable source for activities and educational programs surrounding this annual event. Their well-researched and meticulous tools include lesson plans, audiovisual and published resources, and renowned speakers.

**Texas Liberator Project:** Together with Texas Tech University, the THGC developed the Texas Liberator Project to

introduce and honor those US soldiers who were instrumental in liberating the Nazi death camps and bringing an end to the Holocaust. The project's mission is to bring awareness to this part of our history through education, a traveling exhibit (which our congregation will be pleased to bring to the Georgetown community in 2021), and a website featuring videos and other documentation of the liberation.

Grants and Awards: The THGC offers several grants in support of holocaust education, including non-profit grants awarding up to \$10,000 in funds, eight Educator Grants of up to \$1,000 each to educators and educational institutions to fund projects that educate Texas students and communities about the Holocaust and/or genocides, and student contests that encourage young men and women to consider holocaust themes in their written entries. Congregation Havurah Shalom is one of the groups that has benefitted from the THGC's grant programs. Their support has enabled us to work in conjunction with the Georgetown Library to host an annual Holocaust Memorial program.

These are but a few of the activities developed and supported by the THGC in its mission to eliminate intolerance and prevent further hate-based atrocities in Texas.

We urge the Texas Sunset Review Commission to signal their opposition to hate crimes in our state by reauthorizing the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission.

References: FBI Reports an Increase in Hate Crimes in 2019: Hate-Based Murders More than Doubled | Southern Poverty Law Center ([splcenter.org](http://splcenter.org))

Map: Where the most hate crimes were reported in Texas ([ksat.com](http://ksat.com))

Thank you,

Janice Teplitz, Co-President  
(On Behalf of the Congregation Havurah Board of Directors) Congregation Havurah Shalom  
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Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: We believe additional funds should be allocated to this agency to further their efforts to combat discrimination and hate activities in Texas.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree