

1           A RESOLUTION honoring the memory of recently deceased Holocaust survivors  
2 Renee and John Rothschild, Melvin Goldfarb, and Claus Behr.

3           WHEREAS, according to the Elie Wiesel Center at Boston University, as of 2016  
4 there were approximately 100,000 Jewish survivors from concentration camps or ghettos,  
5 or who had been hiding under Nazi occupation. That number is rapidly growing smaller,  
6 and soon the survivors will be gone; and

7           WHEREAS, since January 1, 2018, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has lost three  
8 well-regarded Holocaust survivors. All of these survivors painfully relived their  
9 experiences and told their stories publicly at events commemorating the lives lost in the  
10 Holocaust, and taught high school students and other groups in Kentucky about their  
11 experiences; and

12           WHEREAS, as the world loses these precious eyewitnesses to the horrors of the  
13 Nazi campaign, it is imperative that their memories and experiences be kept alive and the  
14 citizens of this Commonwealth vow to make sure the candle never goes out and to "Never  
15 Forget"; and

16           WHEREAS, in this spirit, this august body recognizes the extraordinary lives of  
17 four Holocaust survivors who came to Kentucky and spent substantial portions of their  
18 lives here; and

19           WHEREAS, Renee and John Rothschild, married for 75 years, died just weeks  
20 apart in 2018. In July 1942, the Gestapo raided the Rothschild home while John was away  
21 and sent 14 family members to Auschwitz, including John's mother, sister, and brother.  
22 John risked his own life and rescued his wife, Renee, from Rivesaltes internment camp in  
23 Nazi-occupied France, where she was on a list of those soon to be deported to Auschwitz.  
24 The couple, upon escaping Rivesaltes, traveled perilously through several checkpoints  
25 and through barbed wire fences to Switzerland. They eventually made their way to the  
26 United States, where John worked as an engineer with General Motors in Michigan. They  
27 ultimately moved to Kentucky to be with family. They were the only members of their

1 families to survive the Holocaust; and

2       WHEREAS, Melvin Goldfarb, who was 93 years old at the time of his passing on  
3 February 14, 2018, grew up in a tiny town in Poland near the Russian border, where he  
4 lived a simple but happy life before being torn from his family by the Nazis. He was  
5 never to see his parents, sister, or extended family again, as they all perished in the  
6 Holocaust. He was a survivor of Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Ebensee, and when recounting  
7 these horrific experiences to audiences, he said that he "witnessed terrifying brutality  
8 against prisoners—against babies, the elderly, the innocent. It is an unbelievable  
9 thing...everybody had a miracle who survived." Incensed at the indignities he suffered at  
10 the hands of the Nazis, he had his prisoner number, which had been tattooed on his arm,  
11 surgically removed. His instinct to survive carried him through unbearable hardships and  
12 to the brink of death from starvation. He often said his life began on May 6, 1945, the day  
13 of his liberation from Ebensee concentration camp. After the war he met his wife, Esther,  
14 to whom he was married for 70 years. The couple moved to Kentucky, where for many  
15 years Melvin owned and operated the F&G Department Store in Old Louisville; and

16       WHEREAS, Claus Behr passed away in November 2017 at the age of 91. Born and  
17 raised in Germany, he survived Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, where  
18 synagogues and Jewish-owned business were destroyed and many Jews were arrested,  
19 physically assaulted, or murdered. Claus managed to be one of the last to escape Germany  
20 at the age of 13 in 1939, and returned to Europe as a member of the United States Army,  
21 fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. After many years as a successful businessman, he  
22 dedicated his life to helping others and, remembering the Holocaust, he created a fund at  
23 the Jewish Community of Louisville that provides for teacher-led trips to the United  
24 States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.;

25       NOW, THEREFORE,

26 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***  
27 ***Kentucky:***

1           ➔Section 1. The members of the Senate hereby honor the memories of Renee and  
2 John Rothschild, Melvin Goldfarb, and Claus Behr, and urge all Kentuckians to reflect on  
3 the heroism and sacrifices made by all those who survived the atrocities of the Holocaust.

4           ➔Section 2. When the Senate adjourns this day, it does so in memory of Renee  
5 and John Rothschild, Melvin Goldfarb, and Claus Behr.

6           ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this  
7 Resolution to Senator Morgan McGarvey.