



BOB CASEY

FIGHTING *for* PENNSYLVANIA FAMILIES

Commission to Study the Potential Transfer of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History to the Smithsonian Institution Act

U.S. Senator Bob Casey and U.S. Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Mike Turner, Brendan Boyle, and Max Miller

The Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History is a highly regarded museum located in historic Philadelphia overlooking the Liberty Bell. Its mission is to educate visitors and online audiences about the history and culture of Jews, and about how the Jewish people have contributed to our country. The Weitzman's educational program includes student group tours, extension programs in public, private, and parochial school classrooms, curricular materials, historical reenactors, and professional development for educators. The Museum is an important educational resource for our Nation, as it tells the stories of the American Jewish people, whose full history is not currently represented in the Smithsonian's portfolio of culturally specific museums.

The Smithsonian Institution, founded in 1846, is the world's largest museum, education, and research complex. Its museums house art collections and important historical artifacts and tell the stories of specific segments of the American population through the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Museum of the American Latino, and the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum.

The Weitzman's board of trustees is supportive of transferring the Museum to the Smithsonian, including its landmark building in Philadelphia, with no acquisition cost for American taxpayers. Transferring control of the Weitzman Museum and installing it as a permanent museum within the Smithsonian Institution will serve as a powerful symbol of America's commitment to celebrating its diverse communities. This will also elevate the Weitzman's educational efforts to address the recent rise in antisemitism, in parallel with the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism released in May 2023, which also prioritized promoting learning about Jewish heritage.

This legislation would create a commission to study the potential transfer of the Weitzman Museum to the Smithsonian Institution, which is the necessary first step to put the Weitzman Museum on a path toward acquisition by the Smithsonian. Specifically:

- The commission will consist of nine members, with two members appointed by the majority and minority leaders of each chamber, and one member appointed by the board of the Weitzman Museum.
- The commission will write a report to Congress with a recommendation on whether the Weitzman Museum should be transferred to the Smithsonian Institution. The report will also detail the current collections of the Museum; the impact of the Museum on educational and governmental efforts to study and counter antisemitism; the financial assets and liabilities of the Museum and costs of operating and maintaining the Museum; the governance and organizational structure of the Museum should it be transferred; and the impact such a transfer would have on the Smithsonian Institution.
- The commission will not receive any federal funding and will accept private contributions to pay for its expenses.

This bill is endorsed by the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federations of North America, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.