

FIRST-EVER 50-STATE SURVEY ON HOLOCAUST KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICAN MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z REVEALS SHOCKING RESULTS

Disturbing Findings Reveal Significant Number Of Millennials and Gen Z Can't Name A Single Concentration Camp Or Ghetto, Believe That Two Million Or Fewer Jews Were Killed And A Concerning Percentage Believe That Jews Caused The Holocaust



On September 16, 2020 Gideon Taylor, President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), announced the release of the *U.S. Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey*, the first-ever 50-state survey on Holocaust knowledge among Millennials and Gen Z. The surprising state-by-state results highlight a worrying lack of basic

Holocaust knowledge, a growing problem as fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors – eyewitnesses to a state-sponsored genocide – are alive to share the lessons of the Holocaust.

Nationally, there is a clear lack of awareness of key historical facts; 63 percent of all national survey respondents do not know that six million Jews were murdered and 36 percent thought that “two million or fewer Jews” were killed during the Holocaust. Additionally, although there were more than 40,000 camps and ghettos in Europe during the Holocaust, 48 percent of national survey respondents cannot name a single one.



The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem is a memorial to each and every one of the six million Jew who perished in the Holocaust

The state-by-state analysis yielded a particularly disquieting finding that nearly 20 percent of Millennials and Gen Z in New York feel the Jews caused the Holocaust.

“The results are both shocking and saddening and they underscore why we must act now while Holocaust survivors are still with us to voice their stories,” said Gideon Taylor. “We need to understand why we aren’t doing better in educating a younger generation about the Holocaust

and the lessons of the past. This needs to serve as a wake-up call to us all, and as a road map of where government officials need to act.”

The study reveals that Wisconsin scores highest in Holocaust awareness among U.S. Millennials and Gen Z. Arkansas has the lowest Holocaust knowledge score¹, with less than 2-in-10 (17 percent) of Millennials and Gen Z meeting the Holocaust knowledge criteria.

We calculated our Holocaust “knowledge score” by using the percentage of Millennials and Gen Z adults who met all three of the following criteria: 1) have “Definitively heard about the Holocaust,” AND 2) can name at least one concentration camp, death camp, or ghetto, AND 3) know that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

In what might be considered a disturbing sign of the times, 59 percent of respondents indicate that they believe something like the Holocaust could happen again.

The states with the highest Holocaust Knowledge Scores are: Wisconsin, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Maine, Kansas, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Iowa, and Montana.

The states with the lowest Holocaust Knowledge Scores are: Alaska, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

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Major Survey Findings

Camps and Ghettos

- Nationally, 48 percent of U.S. Millennial and Gen Z could not name a single one of the more than 40,000 concentration camps or ghettos established during World War II. This number is reflected in individual state outcomes, with an astounding 60 percent of respondents in Texas, 58 percent in New York, and 57 percent in South Carolina, unable to name a single camp or ghetto.
- 56 percent of U.S. Millennial and Gen Z were unable to identify Auschwitz-Birkenau, and there was virtually no awareness of concentration camps and ghettos overall. Only six percent of respondents are familiar with the infamous Dachau camp, while awareness of Bergen-Belsen (three percent), Buchenwald (one percent) and Treblinka (one percent) is virtually nonexistent.

Number of Jews Murdered

- When asked how many Jews were killed during the Holocaust, 63 percent of Millennials and Gen Z did not know six million Jews were murdered. The states with the lowest scores for this question are Arkansas with 69 percent, followed by Delaware with 68 percent, Arizona with 67 percent, Mississippi and Tennessee with 66 percent, and Hawaii, Iowa, Vermont, and West Virginia with 65 percent.
- When broken down further, 36 percent of Millennials and Gen Z thought that two million or fewer Jews were murdered. Arkansas ranks as the state with the lowest awareness of this widely known data point, with 37 percent believing two million or fewer were murdered, followed by 36 percent in Georgia, Indiana and Ohio; 35 percent in Minnesota; and 34 percent in Arizona, Iowa, Kentucky and New Hampshire.

Responsibility for the Holocaust

- In perhaps one of the most disturbing revelations of this survey, 11 percent of U.S. Millennial and Gen Z respondents believe Jews caused the Holocaust.
- The findings were more disturbing in New York where an astounding 19 percent of respondents felt Jews caused the Holocaust; followed by 16 percent in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Montana and 15 percent in Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Nevada and New Mexico.

Holocaust Denial

- Also troubling is the percentage of Millennials and Gen Z that have witnessed Holocaust denial or distortion on social media. Approximately half (49 percent) of U.S. Millennials and Gen Z have seen Holocaust denial or distortion posts on social media or elsewhere online.
- 30 percent of respondents across all 50 states indicated that they had seen Nazi symbols on their social media platforms or in their community. The state with the highest response was Nevada with 70 percent. Other states with high scores include: New York with 67 percent;
- Arizona and Texas with 64 percent; and Colorado, South Dakota and Washington with 63 percent.

Holocaust Education

- A consistent bright spot across all the survey findings is the desire for Holocaust education. 64 percent of all U.S. Millennials and Gen Z believe that Holocaust education should be compulsory in school.

- 80 percent of all respondents believe that it is important to continue teaching about the Holocaust, in part, so that it does not happen again.

“We came to realize that, although a number of states already mandate Holocaust education which is an excellent first step,” said Claims Conference Holocaust **task force leader Matthew Bronfman**. “For the mandates to have a significant effect in classrooms there must be state funding to support the mandates. The Holocaust is a broad topic. Specialized teacher training and thoughtfully developed curriculum are needed for students to benefit.”

Claims Conference Executive Vice President Greg Schneider said of the survey, “Not only was their overall lack of Holocaust knowledge troubling, but combined with the number of Millennials and Gen Z who have seen Holocaust denial on social media, it is clear that we must fight this distortion of history and do all we can to ensure that the social media giants stop allowing this harmful content on their platforms. Survivors lost their families, friends, homes and communities; we cannot deny their history.” The Claims Conference recently launched #NoDenyingIt, a digital campaign in which survivors, in personal and moving videos appeal directly to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg – imploring him to remove Holocaust denial from his platform. The survey findings underscore the importance the urgent need to understand the Holocaust denial is hate speech and to remove denial of this critical historic event.

To learn more about North Carolina survey results, please visit:

<http://www.claimscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Millennial-Holocaust-Survey-NORTH-CAROLINA-TOPLINE-8.11.20.pdf>