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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

December 12, 1972

Mrs. Nathan Silver
Women's Plea for Soviet Jewry
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Lillian:

My heartiest commendation to you and the Jewish Women of Cincinnati on your efforts today.

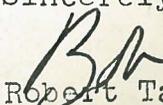
The Jewish minority in the Soviet Union continues to be subjected to religious and cultural repression. While there have been some relaxations, the Soviet authorities habitually harass the Jewish minority. Complex and restrictive requirements are imposed on the right of Russian Jews to emigrate. Mail from outside the Soviet Union to Russian Jews is delayed for long periods of time and quite often discontinued completely. Jewish synagogues have been closed and currently only 60 still remain open with approximately half of these located in non-European sections of the Soviet Union where less than 10 percent of the total Jewish populace resides.

Soviet Jews have no Jewish libraries or social centers to enjoy. No Jewish newspaper, either in Yiddish or Russian, exists.

To summarize briefly, the 3 million Jewish men and women in the Soviet Union are still in jeopardy being subjected to a systematic policy of "spiritual extermination."

I would urge that our Department of State continue to discuss this question and make every effort to impress this issue upon the Soviet Government, especially as to the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate to countries of their choice as affirmed by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. I hope that President Nixon will continue to discuss this crucial issue with high Soviet officials, since any omission to stress the plight of Soviet Jews in our discussions might be construed as an indirect indication that the U. S. Government does not consider this matter as being highly critical.

Sincerely,


Robert Taft, Jr.