



PRESS RELEASE

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AIPAC STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TOM LANTOS

AIPAC extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends and devoted staff of House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Tom Lantos (D-CA). We mourn the loss of one of Congress' most passionate and thoughtful leaders, and one of America's greatest statesmen.

The people of California's 12th Congressional District have lost a tireless worker on their behalf and all Americans have lost one of the true giants of our time.

Tom Lantos was the only Holocaust survivor to ever serve in Congress. Witness to a time in history when man's inhumanity was at its height, Congressman Lantos dedicated his life and career to ensuring that American leadership illuminated the dark places of our world. As a global leader for human rights and champion for the freedom of Soviet Jews, he left an indelible mark in service to his country and improved the lives of countless people throughout the United States and across the globe.

His experience during World War II was a constant reminder to him of the need for a safe haven for the Jewish people. He understood the true meaning of the State of Israel. He knew in a way that few others could appreciate the simple fact that if there had been an Israel in the 1930's and 40's, six million souls would have been spared.

For the last three decades, Congressman Lantos was a champion for American leadership and democracy around the world, serving as a powerful example and advocate for those who stood against tyranny and injustice.

As part of his enduring legacy, Congressman Lantos was a steadfast proponent for a strong and secure Jewish State. Today, there is not a single issue impacting the U.S.-Israel relationship that does not carry his imprint or leadership.

Congressman Lantos defined leadership, perseverance and moral clarity. He personified what is so great about this nation. His life – from innocent child, to persecuted victim, to survivor, to American immigrant, to American citizen, to Congressman – is the embodiment of America's greatness and the miracle of our democratic society.

All Americans, and especially those of us in the pro-Israel community, are deeply indebted to Congressman Lantos for his foresight, leadership and constant example. He will be deeply missed and all of us who felt the impact of his work must dedicate ourselves to continuing his legacy.

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