



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: December 4, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: James Latta, L.C.S.W., Human Services Administrator

Subject: Request For Appropriate Remembrance of Raoul Wallenberg's
100th Birthday

Attachments:

1. Letter from Charles M. Levy re Lady Marjorie Gilbert contribution.
2. H.R. 3001: An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Raoul Wallenberg in recognition of his achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

INTRODUCTION

On August 6, 2012, the City of Beverly Hills received a letter (attachment 1) pledging \$10,000 for an appropriate remembrance of Raoul Wallenberg who would have been 100 years old on August 4th (attachment 2).

DISCUSSION

The City receives a variety of requests for recognition of individuals, groups, historic actions or events, tragic events, celebrations, and special occasions. The requests are often accompanied by donations or offers to cover the costs of purchase and/or installation of a specific item such as a statue, monument, plaque, bench, artwork, rose garden, fountain, etc. It is common for the request to include a specific location or type of location.

On September 20, 2012 the Human Relations Commission participated in a white board exercise to examine potential principles and parameters for consideration when requests for official City recognition of individuals or groups are made. Since there was no specific request made, following the exercise, the Commission discussed foreseeable issues to address when such requests are made. In addition, the Recreation and Parks Commission discussed this topic on September 25, 2012.

The discussion began with concern that if approval of a request were given to an individual or special interest group, would the City then need to consider recognizing all requests? The Human Relations Commission consensus was that it was essential to develop criteria such as requiring a direct connection that tied a request and/or a

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requestor to Beverly Hills, and that it not be just a request for a prominent location. For example, does he or she need to be a resident? Is he or she representative of the City in some way? Is the historic event a part of Beverly Hills' history? In addition, the Commission felt that the criteria should include evaluating the connection or relevance to the City and be specific as to whether the request was tied to the life of someone in *this* city, had a connection such as they lived *here* or contributed to life *here*. Further, the Commission noted that there should be no financial burden to the City including costs of maintenance.

The discussion included the sense that requests for monuments, statues, artwork, etc. placed in City parks and venues would be most common. There was concern raised that because of the high-profile nature of the City, its history and residents, there ultimately wouldn't be enough room to honor all requests and would leave the City open to criticism and challenge when requests were denied. The Commission had a brief discussion about the potential for other opportunities such as purchase of educational materials and/or exhibits for the library related to the tribute may offer an alternative that could benefit the Beverly Hills community in a meaningful way.

The Recreation and Parks Commission discussion included the following opinions and raised the following questions: In theory, such recognition is acceptable but before such recognition is considered, there is need to develop clear guidelines; to what extent and degree should recognition be given before the City gets inundated with requests; there is a need to determine answers to questions such as how many and who qualifies before the City is faced with fields of recognition plaques; how to deal with capping of requests without offending those who are turned down; alternatives such as a national day of remembrance, or culturally educational options such as support for an exhibit at the library, or purchase of something for the library, or plaque in the library (but not the park) which would also need guidelines for what could be exhibited and for how long.

FISCAL IMPACT

At this time, there is no specific request for a remembrance of Raoul Wallenberg. There are no City funds budgeted for a tribute. There is a \$10,000 pledge to finance an activity.

RECOMMENDATION

If Council decides to move forward with a request for remembrance of Raoul Wallenberg, the matter could be referred to the Human Relations Council liaisons (Vice Mayor Mirisch, Councilmember Brucker) for consideration to include the following options:

- 1) Identify a National day of remembrance or similar activity to recognize Raoul Wallenberg (e.g., Holocaust Remembrance Day, April 7- 8, 2013);
- 2) Use the \$10,000 pledge to support a Wallenberg exhibit at the Library;
- 3) Purchase a culturally educational Wallenberg collection for the community

Steve Zoet
Approved By



ATTACHMENT 1

Charles M. Levy
815 Moraga Drive
Los Angeles, California 90049-1633
Telephone (310) 471-3000
Facsimile (310) 471-7990

August 6, 2012

VIA EMAIL AND
FIRST CLASS MAIL
Mcrowder@beverlyhills.org

City Council
City of Beverly Hills
455 N. Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Re: Raoul Wallenberg Remembrance

Gentlemen:

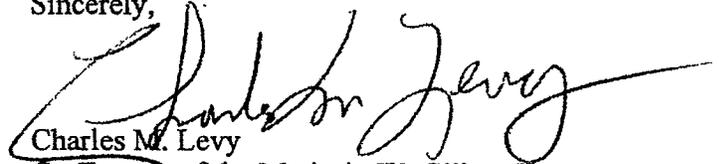
Lady Marjorie Gilbert and I are co-Trustees of the Marjorie W. Gilbert 2001 Trust established by her late husband, Sir Arthur Gilbert.

Sir Arthur was very interested in the plight of Raoul Wallenberg and devoted a substantial amount of time, and funds, to attempts to locate and free this great humanitarian. Of course, as we all know, Raoul was never located.

Lady Gilbert learned of a request that will be made of the Beverly Hills City Council for an appropriate remembrance of Raoul Wallenberg's 100th birthday. In memory of her late husband, Sir Arthur, the Marjorie Gilbert Trust would like to make a contribution to that cause.

You may count on us for a \$10,000 contribution.

Sincerely,


Charles M. Levy
Co-Trustee of the Marjorie W. Gilbert Trust

CML:kr

cc: Lady Marjorie Gilbert

ATTACHMENT 2

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3001

AN ACT

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Raoul Wallenberg,
in recognition of his achievements and heroic actions
during the Holocaust.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Raoul Wallenberg Cen-
3 tennial Celebration Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds as follows:

6 (1) Raoul Wallenberg was born in Europe on
7 August 4, 1912, to Swedish Christian parents.

8 (2) In 1935, he graduated from the University
9 of Michigan in Ann Arbor, completing a five-year
10 program in three-and-a-half years.

11 (3) In a letter to his grandfather, Wallenberg
12 wrote of his time in America: “I feel so at home in
13 my little Ann Arbor that I’m beginning to sink down
14 roots here and have a hard time imagining my leav-
15 ing it. . . . Every now and then I feel strange when
16 I think about how tiny my own country is and how
17 large and wonderful America is.”.

18 (4) Raoul returned to Sweden, where he began
19 a career as a businessman, and afterwards, a Swed-
20 ish diplomat.

21 (5) In 1936, Raoul’s grandfather arranged a
22 position for him at the Holland Bank in Haifa, Pal-
23 estine. There Raoul began to meet young Jews who
24 had already been forced to flee from Nazi persecu-
25 tion in Germany. Their stories affected him deeply.

1 (6) He was greatly troubled by the fate of Jews
2 in Europe, confiding to actress Viveca Lindfors the
3 horrific plight of Jews under Nazi Europe.

4 (7) Under the direction of President Franklin
5 D. Roosevelt, the War Refugee Board was estab-
6 lished in January 1944 to aid civilians that fell vic-
7 tim to the Nazi and Axis powers in Europe.

8 (8) One of War Refugee Board's top priorities
9 was protection of the 750,000 Hungarian Jews still
10 alive.

11 (9) It was decided that Raoul Wallenberg, aged
12 31 at the time, would be most effective in protecting
13 Jews and victims of the Nazis in Hungary under the
14 War Refugee Board. He was recruited by Iver
15 Olsen, an agent for the Office of Strategic Services
16 and sent to Budapest, Hungary, under his official
17 profession as a Swedish diplomat. He was instructed
18 to use passports and other creative means to save as
19 many lives as possible.

20 (10) Wallenberg created a new Swedish pass-
21 port, the Schutzpass, which looked more imposing
22 and official than the actual Swedish passport. He re-
23 portedly put up huge place cards of it throughout
24 Budapest to make the Nazis familiar with it. He
25 unilaterally announced that it granted the holder im-

1 munity from the death camps. The Schutzpasses
2 alone are credited with saving 20,000 Jewish lives.

3 (11) In one example of his heroism, Wallenberg
4 was told of a Nazi plot to round up several thousand
5 Jewish women and acted swiftly to save them.
6 Former Wallenberg staffer, Agnes Adachi, recalls
7 the time when she and other staff, spent the whole
8 night making around 2,000 Schutzpasses before 6
9 a.m. They were all completed and personally deliv-
10 ered to the women in time to save their lives.

11 (12) Using the money the United States put
12 into the War Refugee Board, Wallenberg was able to
13 purchase about thirty buildings, which he used as
14 hospitals, schools, soup kitchens, and safe houses for
15 over 8,000 children whose parents have already been
16 deported or killed.

17 (13) Tommy Lapid, a young boy who was stay-
18 ing with his mother in a Swedish safe house (his fa-
19 ther was already dead), gave an eyewitness account
20 of how his family was helped by Wallenberg and the
21 War Refugee Board: "One morning, a group of
22 Hungarian Fascists came into the house and said
23 that all the able-bodied women must go with them.
24 We knew what this meant. My mother kissed me
25 and I cried and she cried. We knew we were parting

1 forever and she left me there, an orphan to all in-
2 tents and purposes. Then two or three hours later,
3 to my amazement, my mother returned with the
4 other women. It seemed like a mirage, a miracle. My
5 mother was there—she was alive and she was hug-
6 ging me and kissing me, and she said one word:
7 Wallenberg.”.

8 (14) Even as the war was coming to a close,
9 Wallenberg remained vigilant and attentive to the
10 people under his care. Adolf Eichmann, the SS colo-
11 nel charged with the extermination of Jews in East-
12 ern Europe, was determined to exterminate the
13 70,000 Jews kept as prisoners in a guarded ghetto
14 in Budapest. As soon as Wallenberg heard of the
15 plot, he sent Pal Szalay, an Arrow-Crossman senior
16 official, who defected and turned to Wallenberg.
17 Szalay was sent to speak to General Schmidhuber,
18 who was ordered to spearhead the ghetto extermi-
19 nation in Budapest. Szalay informed Schmidhuber
20 that, seeing as the war was coming to an end, if the
21 planned massacre took place, Wallenberg would see
22 to it personally that Schmidhuber would be pros-
23 ecuted as a war criminal and hanged. The plans
24 were ultimately abandoned and considered Wallen-
25 berg’s last big victory.

1 (15) Of the 120,000 Hungarian Jews that sur-
2 vived, Raoul Wallenberg, acting under the War Ref-
3 ugee Board, is credited with saving an estimated
4 100,000 of them in a six-month period.

5 (16) Raoul Wallenberg's fate remains a mys-
6 tery. In January 13, 1945, he contacted the Rus-
7 sians in an effort to secure food for the Jews under
8 his protection—as he was still working hard to pro-
9 tect them.

10 (17) In 1981, President Ronald Reagan made
11 Raoul Wallenberg an honorary citizen of the United
12 States, an honor only previously extended to Win-
13 ston Churchill.

14 (18) These findings show that Raoul Wallen-
15 berg showed exceptional heroism and bravery with
16 his actions during the holocaust. Working with the
17 War Refugee Board, a United State's agency, he
18 was able to save about 100,000 Hungarian Jews,
19 many of which were later able to immigrate to the
20 United States.

21 (19) Indeed, hundreds of thousands of Amer-
22 ican Jews can directly or indirectly attribute their
23 own lives to Raoul Wallenberg's actions during
24 World War II. Many of the people Wallenberg saved
25 have been influential citizens contributing to Amer-

1 ican institutions and culture, including Congressman
2 Tom Lantos (February 1, 1928–February 11,
3 2008), Annette Lantos, and the Liska Rebbe, Rabbi
4 Yoizef (Joseph) Friedlander, who carried forth the
5 Liska Hassidic dynasty from Hungary to the United
6 States after being saved by Raoul Wallenberg.

7 (20) His actions and character make him an ex-
8 cellent contender for a Congressional Gold Medal in
9 time for the centennial of his birth, to celebrate his
10 achievements and humanitarian accomplishments.

11 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

12 (a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of
13 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
14 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
15 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
16 medal of appropriate design to the next of kin or personal
17 representative of Raoul Wallenberg, in recognition of his
18 achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

19 (b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For the purpose of the
20 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
21 of the Treasury shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-
22 blems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the
23 Secretary.

1 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 Under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treas-
3 ury may prescribe, the Secretary may strike duplicate
4 medals in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to
5 section 3 and sell such duplicate medals at a price suffi-
6 cient to cover the costs of the duplicate medals (including
7 labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead ex-
8 penses) and the cost of the gold medal.

9 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

10 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
11 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
12 51 of title 31, United States Code.

13 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
14 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
15 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

16 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
17 **SALE.**

18 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF CHARGES.—There is author-
19 ized to be charged against the United States Mint Public
20 Enterprise Fund, such amounts as may be necessary to
21 pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant to this
22 Act.

23 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
24 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 4 shall be

1 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
2 Fund.

Passed the House of Representatives April 16, 2012.

Attest:

Clerk.

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2^D SESSION

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