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**GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION CREATING STATEWIDE
GENOCIDE COMMISSION AT ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM**

***100 State Legislators, Holocaust and Genocide Survivors, Museum and Community
Leaders Join Governor Quinn at Bill Signing Ceremony***

SKOKIE, IL — Approximately one hundred people joined Governor Pat Quinn today at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center for the signing of House Bill 6059. The Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission Act, as the bill is known, creates an 18-member commission to increase public awareness of the Holocaust and other genocides through educational programs, events and outreach efforts.

In addition to Governor Quinn, the bill's chief sponsors, Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-12) and Sen. Ira Silverstein (D-8), as well as Skokie-area Rep. Lou Lang (D-16) addressed the crowd gathered in the Museum's symbolic Pritzker Hall of Reflection. There to witness this important event were 13 members of the Illinois General Assembly, including many bill co-sponsors; survivors of the Armenian, Cambodian, Srebrenica, Sudanese and Ukrainian genocides; Holocaust survivors; Museum and community leadership; and members of the general public.

"The potential impact of the new commission is significant. It will bring greater awareness and understanding of the consequences of hate and indifference to every corner of our state and will unite diverse communities scarred by human rights atrocities," said Richard Hirschhaut, Executive Director of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. "In choosing the Museum as the venue for enacting this important legislation, Governor Quinn honors the memories of those who were lost, as well as the dignity of those who survived the Holocaust and other genocides."

The commission represents the latest milestone in the State of Illinois' visionary treatment of the issue, which began in 1990 with the passage of the landmark Holocaust Education Act. This legislation was the first of its kind in the nation to mandate the teaching of the Holocaust in public schools. Five years ago, the mandate was expanded to include teaching about historic and contemporary genocides, like the ongoing crisis in Darfur.

"We must remember the tragedy of the Holocaust and other genocides that have occurred throughout history," said Governor Quinn. "The Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission will remind everyone in Illinois of the horrors of genocide and ethnic cleansing, and will work towards ensuring tolerance among future generations."

The commission will assist Holocaust- and genocide-focused educational institutions and service organizations with public awareness efforts. It will also compile a list of Holocaust and other genocide survivors, liberators and other volunteers to share their knowledge and experiences. Additionally, the commission will coordinate events to memorialize the Holocaust and other genocides on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, occurring every Jan. 27.

Likely the last international institution of its kind built with the active participation of Holocaust survivors, the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center is the largest facility in the Midwest dedicated to preserving the memories of those lost in the Holocaust and to teaching current generations to fight hatred, indifference and genocide in today's world.

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