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## A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner

Friday April 1, 2022 ~ Parsha: Tazria  
Shabbat HaChodesh

### A New Weapon In the Fight Against Anti-Semitism

Dear JCCP/CBT family,

On Wednesday, after many months of procedural delays by Senate Republicans, Dr. Deborah Lipstadt was finally confirmed as our nation's Special Envoy to monitor and combat anti-semitism. Her confirmation is a welcome development for all who are concerned about the rise in anti-semitism both in the United States, and throughout the world. Sadly, petty partisan politics blocked her nomination for too long

The position of a special envoy to monitor anti-semitism was created in 2004 during the Bush administration. At the end of the Trump Administration, the position was upgraded to the rank of ambassador, requiring Senate confirmation. Dr. Lipstadt, a leading authority on the Holocaust, who currently serves as Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at Emory University, and one of the world's most preeminent Jewish scholars, was nominated on July 30, 2021 by President Biden. She had made a career of scholarship as well as activism against Holocaust revisionism and hatred of Jews. She was a brilliant choice for this important position. Sadly, her confirmation hearings were delayed on many occasions due to Republican opposition, especially that of Senator Ron Johnson.

Dr. Lipstadt is one of the world's leading authorities on the Holocaust, whose scholarship on the subject has been universally acclaimed. She is famous for defending herself in a defamation suit initiated by notorious Holocaust denier David Irving, in London. In perhaps the most public rebuttal of Holocaust revisionism in history, *David Irving v Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt*, David Irving asserted that Lipstadt had libeled him in her 1993 book *Denying the Holocaust*.

***The court ruled that Irving's claim of libel relating to Holocaust denial was not valid under English defamation law because Lipstadt's claim that he had deliberately distorted evidence had been shown to be substantially true.***

Her victory in that trial inspired the 2016 motion picture “Denial” which starred Academy Award-winning actor Rachel Weisz as Professor Lipstadt.

Her nomination to this important position was supported by groups and organizations throughout the Jewish world and beyond, including Jewish Federations of North America, the Orthodox Union, Christians United for Israel, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Hadassah, and so many others. Groups spanning the political and religious divide, enthusiastically backed her nomination. In her tireless defense of Jewish dignity, and courageous rebuke of both Republicans as well as Democrats for veering into anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric, she made powerful enemies among both the Democratic left as well as the Republican right. The delays in her confirmation hearings were nothing but political payback.

Now while the Senate may have had the luxury of delaying a vote to confirm Dr. Lipstadt to this position (as an ambassadorial level appointment, the position must be ratified by the Senate), world Jewry is in no such position. During the past year we have seen a spike in anti-Semitic attacks in our nation, and ever-increasing number of attacks in Europe. Russia’s illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine has led to a tremendous increase in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories blaming the war on Jews. It is precisely because of the increase as well as the severity of these incidents that this office was raised to the rank of an ambassador. With this title, this position now has the gravitas to make the types of changes that will make Jews and all who suffer from bigotry safer.

In testimony before the Senate in February, Dr Lipstadt made the following statement “I am an equal-opportunity foe of antisemitism. Unless one is willing to fight Jew-

hatred wherever one finds it, one should not be a nominee for this position.” Now confirmed, may all her efforts be crowned with success.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Arthur Weiner