



Philly Jewish Museum Posts Huge Sign Reminding Americans of Freedom of Religion

By: JNi.Media

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Jewish Museum's sign in Philadelphia's Independence Mall.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of NMAJH

The [National Museum of American Jewish History](#) (NMAJH), located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, has installed new building signage asserting George Washington's promise of religious liberty to the people of the United States.

Quoting Washington's iconic letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island in 1790, the enormous banner reads, "Happily the Government of the United States ... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." The Museum—a safe, open space for all—displays this text as a timely reminder of the ideals of inclusiveness on which this nation was founded.

Facing Independence Mall as it does, in the heart of historic Philadelphia, the Museum's signage refers to one of the most significant documents in American history. George Washington's letter, currently on view at NMAJH, was composed in August 1790 in response

to a letter from the Jewish community of Newport. In it, Washington affirmed rights denied to Jews for millennia and underscored the nation's commitment to respecting religious liberty and equality for people of all faiths. Washington described his vision of a country in which "every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."

"George Washington's call for religious pluralism is especially powerful today, given the rise in expressions of bigotry and exclusion in recent months," states Ivy Barsky, NMAJH's CEO & Gwen Goodman Director. "Just as Washington fervently promised to preserve this nation's acceptance of all people, the National Museum of American Jewish History remains committed as ever to our mission of inspiring a greater appreciation for the diversity of the American experience and the invaluable contributions to this country by immigrants."