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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5851**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Braun, Salomon, Billig, Gildon, Hasegawa, Holy, Liias, MacEwen, McCune, Schoesler, Short, Torres, Valdez, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick, C. Wilson, and L. Wilson)

AN ACT Relating to Holocaust and genocide education in public schools; amending RCW 28A.300.115; adding new sections to chapter 28A.230 RCW; providing an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.230 RCW to read as follows:

(1) April of each year is hereby designated international genocide prevention and awareness month to provide space for formal recognition of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity.

(2) During the month of April, each public school shall conduct or promote age-appropriate educational activities that provide instruction, awareness, and understanding of the Holocaust and genocide education to all students. These activities may include classroom instruction, guest speaker presentations, school assemblies, and other developmentally appropriate activities.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.300.115 and 2019 c 85 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) ((~~Every~~)) (a) In addition to the requirements in section 1 of this act, every public middle school, junior high school, and high school is strongly encouraged to include in its curriculum instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust((~~, the systemic, German state-sponsored persecution and murder of Jews and other innocent victims by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between the years 1933 and 1945. The instruction may also include~~)) and other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity. The studying of this material is intended to: Examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences.

(b) Public schools are strongly encouraged to offer at least one Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective that is available to students at least once during grades six through 12.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust and genocide, must:

(a) Develop best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction under this section; and

(b) Encourage and support middle school, junior high school, and high school teachers in implementing these best practices and guidelines.

(3) Beginning September 1, 2020, middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools that offer instruction as described in subsection (1) of this section must follow the best practices and guidelines developed under subsection (2) of this section.

(4)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must update and electronically publish the best practices and guidelines developed under this section on an annual basis.

(b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must electronically publish, and update as needed, guidance on vertical alignment, materials, and professional learning to support implementation of the stand-alone elective described in subsection (1)(b) of this section.

(5) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Genocide" means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

(i) Killing members of the group;

(ii) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(iii) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(iv) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(b) "Holocaust" means the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of 6,000,000 Jews, as well as millions of Roma, LGBTQ identified people, political opponents, and others by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators between the years 1933 and 1945.

(6) This section expires July 1, 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.230 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) Beginning with the 2027-28 school year, public middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools shall provide instruction on the following when the topics align with the social studies learning standards including United States history and contemporary world history:

(i) The events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust; and

(ii) Other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity.

(b) The studying of the material in (a) of this subsection is intended to: Examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences. This instruction must follow the best practices and guidelines developed and updated under subsection (2)(a) of this section.

(c) Public schools are strongly encouraged to offer at least one Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective that is available to students at least once during grades six through 12.

(2)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust and genocide, shall:

(i) Develop and annually update and electronically publish best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction under this section; and

(ii) Support middle school, junior high school, and high school teachers in implementing these best practices and guidelines.

(b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must electronically publish, and update as needed, guidance on vertical alignment, materials, and professional learning to support implementation of the stand-alone elective described in subsection (1)(c) of this section.

(3) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Genocide" means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

(i) Killing members of the group;

(ii) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(iii) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(iv) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(b) "Holocaust" means the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of 6,000,000 Jews, as well as millions of Roma, LGBTQ identified people, political opponents, and others by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators between the years 1933 and 1945.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1, 2027.

**--- END ---**