
Education Committee

HB 2037

Brief Description: Concerning Holocaust and genocide education in public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Couture, Senn, Leavitt, Fitzgibbon, Rude, Hutchins, Low, Christian, Ramel, Ryu, Ormsby, Barnard, Graham, Callan, Macri, Cheney, Sandlin, Goodman, Caldier, Nance, Riccelli, Reeves, Paul, Pollet, Griffey and Davis.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, certain public schools to provide instruction on the Holocaust and other genocides and crimes against humanity when the topic aligns with the social studies learning standards.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to publish resources to support Holocaust and genocide education.
- Designates April as International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month and requires public schools to provide age-appropriate activities related to Holocaust and genocide education.

Hearing Date: 1/23/24

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Holocaust and Genocide Education.

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

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1945. The instruction may also include other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity.

It is specified that 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.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust, must develop, and annually publish electronically, best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction on this topic. When offered by public schools, instruction on this topic must follow these best practices and guidelines.

Summary of Bill:

Holocaust and Genocide Education.

Beginning with the 2027-28 school year, when the topic aligns with the social studies learning standards, public middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools are required (rather than strongly encouraged) to provide instruction on the Holocaust and other genocides and crimes against humanity.

In addition, 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 6 through 12.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust, must annually update the best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction that it developed on this topic.

The OSPI must also electronically publish, and update as needed, guidance on vertical alignment, materials, and professional learning to support implementation of the stand-alone elective.

International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month.

April of each year is 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.

During the month of April, each public school must 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2024.

Effective Date: The bill contains multiple effective dates. Please see the bill.