

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2212

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to study of the Holocaust.

Brief Description: Requiring public school study of the Holocaust.

Sponsor(s): Representatives O'Brien, Jacobsen, Locke, Anderson, Wineberry, Jones and Nelson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 6, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 17 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Carlson; G. Cole; P. Johnson; Jones; J. Kohl; Neher; Orr; Rasmussen; Roland; and Valle.

Staff: Margaret Allen (786-7191).

Background:

Over 50 years have passed since the start of World War II, and many of our citizens living at that time have passed away. Prior to and during that war, several million Jews and non-Jews were exterminated - an event unbeknownst to most of the world at the time and now known as the "Holocaust."

As time elapses, fewer people with contemporary memories of the Holocaust will be available to share the history of that event. Current law imposes no requirement that students study the Holocaust, other than a general requirement that students study world history.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Every public high school is encouraged to include a unit of instruction on the Holocaust. The instruction may also include other examples of genocide from ancient and modern history.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may prepare materials for use as guidelines in developing the unit of instruction and may make the materials available to all school districts.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Unlike the substitute bill, the original bill required every public elementary and high school to include a unit of instruction the Holocaust. The substitute deletes the reference to elementary schools, and raises the possibility of including instruction on other examples of genocide.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Studying the Holocaust will permit students to understand the types of behavior and thinking that allowed those events to occur. Some defining moments in history speak to the capacity for evil. Circumstances still exist that might permit the recurrence of such an event, as evidenced by anti-Semitic activities in a local school district last year.

Testimony Against: There is no record of the atrocities committed by the Jewish people and Bolsheviks on Germans. The bill should not be necessary. There should be no requirement to teach one side of a subject, regardless of what the subject is. Schools are overly regulated already. To emphasize what happened to one group of people is wrong, as it is happening to other groups of people all over the world right now.

Witnesses: Representative John. L. O'Brien, prime sponsor (supports); Russ Lidmann, citizen (supports); Harry Schmidt, German-American National Political Action Committee (opposes); and Barbara Bence, Populist Party (opposes).