

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5612

As of February 21, 2019

Title: An act relating to Holocaust education.

Brief Description: Concerning Holocaust education.

Sponsors: Senators Rivers, Salomon, Frockt, Wilson, C., Carlyle, Billig, Wellman, Zeiger, Warnick, Palumbo, Pedersen, Van De Wege, Hasegawa, Holy, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Liias and O'Ban.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Strongly encourages instruction on the Holocaust in every public middle, junior high, and high school.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to partner with expert organizations to develop best practices, standards, and guidelines for high quality instruction on the Holocaust and to encourage, support, and train teachers in implementing them.
- Requires middle, junior, and high schools offering this instruction to follow the best practices, standards, and guidelines that are developed beginning September 1, 2020.
- Tasks OSPI and the expert organizations with submitting a report including whether instruction about the Holocaust should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Current state law encourages every public high school to include in its curriculum instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust, during which six million Jews and millions of non-Jews were exterminated. The instruction may also include other examples from both ancient and modern history where

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

subcultures or large human populations have been eradicated by the acts of humankind. Studying this material is a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) may prepare and make available instructional materials for use as guidelines for this instruction.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Holocaust Instruction. Every public middle, junior high, and high school are strongly encouraged to include instruction on the events of the Holocaust, which is defined as the systemic, German state-sponsored persecution and murder of Jews and other innocent victims by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between the years 1933-1945. The instruction may also include other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity.

In addition to this study being a reaffirmation to never again permit such occurrences, studying this material is intended to examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance and prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy.

Best Practices, Standards, and Guidelines. OSPI must partner with expert Washington nonprofit organizations that teach the lessons of the Holocaust and support and train Washington teachers in instructing the lessons of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide to:

- develop best practices, standards, and guidelines for high quality instruction;
- encourage and support teachers in implementing them; and
- train teachers subject to appropriations.

Beginning September 1, 2020, middle, junior high, and high schools offering this instruction must follow the best practices, standards, and guidelines that are developed.

OSPI must electronically publish the best practices, standards, and guidelines on an annual basis.

Report. By November 14, 2022, OSPI must collect feedback from expert Washington nonprofit organizations about:

- how the best practices, standards, and guidelines for high quality instruction are being implemented statewide;
- whether, and how, the best practices, standards, and guidelines should be modified;
- the number of teachers trained and supported in the past two years; and
- whether instruction should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

By December 12, 2022, OSPI must work with expert Washington nonprofit organizations to summarize the feedback and report it to the Legislature with a recommendation about whether instruction should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2019.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute: PRO: Those that do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. A number of students do not know about the Holocaust while the number of hate crimes have increased. Holocaust instruction is limited and students receive varying levels of education on this topic. Teachers are concerned about the bias and discrimination that is currently happening in schools. Teachers want to provide a safe environment for all of their students. Teaching the Holocaust can open the door to some difficult and important conversations. Teachers want support and tools from experts to teach this topic. Students need to be taught about what happens when hate and bigotry fester and people are indifferent to their neighbors. Hearing from Holocaust survivors and learning about genocide can change students' lives. This type of education is imperative and will lead to a more just society.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Ann Rivers, Prime Sponsor; Dee Simon, Executive Director, Holocaust Center; Peter Metzelaar, citizen; Ingrid Steppic, citizen; Lauren Bear, citizen; Banda Anderson, citizen; Mario Falit-Baiamonte, citizen; Jerry Price, OSPI.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.