

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5612

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As Passed Senate, March 12, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to Holocaust education.

**Brief Description:** Concerning Holocaust education.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rivers, Salomon, Frockt, Wilson, C., Carlyle, Billig, Wellman, Zeiger, Warnick, Palumbo, Pedersen, Van De Wege, Hasegawa, Holy, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias and O'Ban).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/19, 2/22/19 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/28/19, 3/01/19 [DPS (EDU)].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed Senate: 3/12/19, 49-0.

### Brief Summary of First Substitute 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 an expert organization to develop best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction on the Holocaust and to encourage, support, and train teachers in implementing them.
- Requires middle, junior high, and high schools offering this instruction to follow the best practices and guidelines that are developed beginning September 1, 2020.
- Tasks OSPI with submitting a report including a recommendation about whether Holocaust instruction should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5612 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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*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.*

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Holy, Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Padden, Pedersen, Salomon and Wagoner.

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Operating, Capital Lead; Mullet, Capital Budget Cabinet; Braun, Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Becker, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Keiser, Liias, Palumbo, Pedersen, Rivers, Schoesler, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, L..

**Staff:** Kayla Hammer (786-7305)

**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 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 First Substitute Bill:** 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 and Guidelines. OSPI, in collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust, must:

- develop best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction;
- encourage and support middle, junior high, and high school teachers in implementing them; and
- train teachers who teach in subjects relevant to the topic subject to appropriations.

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

OSPI must electronically publish the best practices 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 and guidelines for high quality instruction are being implemented statewide;
- whether, and how, the best practices 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:** Available.

**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 (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* 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 (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** 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 (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute (Ways & Means):** PRO: Hate crimes in Washington in 2017 increased 32 percent. Holocaust knowledge is low and this training and teaching would help and be a strong investment for Washington. Teachers have a need to teach this subject and the trainings would give them the necessary tools.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Dee Simon, Executive Director of Holocaust Center; Nancy Sapiro, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.