

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5851

As of January 15, 2024

Title: An act relating to Holocaust and genocide education in public schools.

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

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Salomon, Billig, Gildon, Hasegawa, Holy, Lias, MacEwen, McCune, Schoesler, Short, Torres, Valdez, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick, Wilson, C. and Wilson, L..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/17/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Designates April as International Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month to provide space for formal recognition of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity.
- Strongly encourages public schools to offer at least one Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective available at least once during grades 6-12.
- Requires public middle, junior high, and high schools to provide Holocaust and genocide instruction when this topic aligns with the social studies learning standards beginning with the 2027-28 school year.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Holocaust and Genocide Instruction. State law strongly encourages public middle, junior high, and high schools to include in its curriculum instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust, the systemic, German state-

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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 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.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with an expert nonprofit organization, must develop best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction and encourage and support teachers. Beginning in 2020, schools that offer Holocaust and genocide instruction must follow these best practices and guidelines.

Subject to appropriations, OSPI must work with an expert nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust to support and train teachers. The 2023-25 operating budget included \$750,000 each for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 for OSPI to contract with a nonprofit organization for the expansion of comprehensive Holocaust and genocide education.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Report. In 2019, the Legislature directed OSPI to collect feedback from expert nonprofit organizations about Holocaust and genocide education best practices and guidelines, the number of teachers trained, and whether instruction should be required.

OSPI submitted a report on these topics in 2022 with recommendations that addressed the following:

- establishing a requirement for all schools to recognize International Genocide Prevention and Awareness month in April;
- strongly encouraging all school districts to offer at least one Holocaust and genocide stand-alone elective; and
- requiring Holocaust and genocide education content be taught in courses that align with the social studies learning standards beginning in the 2027-28 school year.

Summary of Bill: 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 this month, 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.

Stand-Alone Elective. Public schools are strongly encouraged to offer at least one

Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective available to students at least once during grades 6-12. OSPI must electronically publish, and update as needed, guidance on vertical alignment, materials, and professional learning to support implementation of the stand-alone elective.

Required Holocaust Instruction. Beginning with the 2027-28 school year, public middle, junior high, and high schools must provide instruction on the Holocaust and other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity when this topic aligns with the social studies learning standards including U.S. history and contemporary world history. The instruction must follow practices and guidelines developed and annually updated by OSPI.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 2, 2024.

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

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.