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HOUSE BILL 2037

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State of Washington

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2024 Regular Session

**By** 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

Prefiled 12/22/23. Read first time 01/08/24. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to Holocaust and genocide education in public  
2 schools; amending RCW 28A.300.115; adding new sections to chapter  
3 28A.230 RCW; providing an effective date; and providing an expiration  
4 date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230  
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) April of each year is hereby designated international  
9 genocide prevention and awareness month to provide space for formal  
10 recognition of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide and  
11 crimes against humanity.

12 (2) During the month of April, each public school shall conduct  
13 or promote age-appropriate educational activities that provide  
14 instruction, awareness, and understanding of the Holocaust and  
15 genocide education to all students. These activities may include  
16 classroom instruction, guest speaker presentations, school  
17 assemblies, and other developmentally appropriate activities.

18 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.300.115 and 2019 c 85 s 1 are each amended to  
19 read as follows:

1 (1) ~~((Every))~~ (a) In addition to the requirements in section 1 of  
2 this act, every public middle school, junior high school, and high  
3 school is strongly encouraged to include in its curriculum  
4 instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known  
5 as the Holocaust, the systemic, German state-sponsored persecution  
6 and murder of Jews and other innocent victims by the Nazi regime and  
7 its collaborators between the years 1933 and 1945. The instruction  
8 may also include other examples of genocide and crimes against  
9 humanity. The studying of this material is intended to: Examine the  
10 ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students  
11 to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a  
12 reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit  
13 such occurrences.

14 (b) Public schools are strongly encouraged to offer at least one  
15 Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective that is  
16 available to students at least once during grades six through 12.

17 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in  
18 collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that  
19 teaches the lessons of the Holocaust, must:

20 (a) Develop best practices and guidelines for high quality  
21 instruction under this section; and

22 (b) Encourage and support middle school, junior high school, and  
23 high school teachers in implementing these best practices and  
24 guidelines.

25 (3) Beginning September 1, 2020, middle schools, junior high  
26 schools, and high schools that offer instruction as described in  
27 subsection (1) of this section must follow the best practices and  
28 guidelines developed under subsection (2) of this section.

29 (4) (a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction  
30 must update and electronically publish the best practices and  
31 guidelines developed under this section on an annual basis.

32 (b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
33 electronically publish, and update as needed, guidance on vertical  
34 alignment, materials, and professional learning to support  
35 implementation of the stand-alone elective described in subsection  
36 (1)(b) of this section.

37 (5) This section expires July 1, 2027.

38 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 28A.230  
39 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1)(a) Beginning with the 2027-28 school year, public middle  
2 schools, junior high schools, and high schools shall provide  
3 instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known  
4 as the Holocaust, the systemic, German state-sponsored persecution  
5 and murder of Jews and other innocent victims by the Nazi regime and  
6 its collaborators between the years 1933 and 1945 when this topic  
7 aligns with the social studies learning standards including United  
8 States history and contemporary world history. The instruction must  
9 also include other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity.  
10 The studying of this material is intended to: Examine the  
11 ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students  
12 to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a  
13 reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit  
14 such occurrences. This instruction must follow the best practices and  
15 guidelines developed and updated under subsection (2)(a) of this  
16 section.

17 (b) Public schools are strongly encouraged to offer at least one  
18 Holocaust and genocide education stand-alone elective that is  
19 available to students at least once during grades six through 12.

20 (2)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in  
21 collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that  
22 teaches the lessons of the Holocaust, shall:

23 (i) Develop and annually update and electronically publish best  
24 practices and guidelines for high quality instruction under this  
25 section; and

26 (ii) Support middle school, junior high school, and high school  
27 teachers in implementing these best practices and guidelines.

28 (b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
29 electronically publish, and update as needed, guidance on vertical  
30 alignment, materials, and professional learning to support  
31 implementation of the stand-alone elective described in subsection  
32 (1)(b) of this section.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1,  
34 2027.

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