

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

H

2

HOUSE BILL 69
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/23/21

Short Title: Education on the Holocaust and Genocide.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 11, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO INTEGRATE EDUCATION ON THE HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE INTO
THE STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY.

Whereas, on May 29, 2020, the United States Congress enacted into law the "Never Again Education Act" (P.L. 116-141), recognizing the importance of institutionalizing education about the events of the Holocaust, and providing that "Holocaust education provides a context in which to learn about the danger of what can happen when hate goes unchallenged and there is indifference in the face of oppression of others; learning how and why the Holocaust happened is an important component of the education of citizens of the United States."; and

Whereas, the term "antisemitism" is defined in the Never Again Education Act as "a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities"; and

Whereas, the term "Holocaust" is defined in the Never Again Education Act as "the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of 6,000,000 Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived 'racial inferiority', such as Roma, the disabled, and Slavs. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals"; and

Whereas, "Holocaust denial and distortion" is defined in the Never Again Education Act as "discourse and propaganda that deny the historical reality and the extent of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis and their accomplices during World War II, known as the Holocaust. Holocaust denial refers specifically to any attempt to claim that the Holocaust did not take place. Holocaust distortion refers to efforts to excuse or minimize the events of the Holocaust or its principal elements, including collaborators and allies of Nazi Germany, to blame the Jews for causing their own genocide, or to portray the Holocaust as a positive historical event."; and

Whereas, the Never Again Education Act recognizes "a national imperative to educate students in the United States so that they may explore the lessons that the Holocaust provides for all people, sensitize communities to the circumstances that gave rise to the Holocaust, and help youth to be less susceptible to the falsehood of Holocaust denial and distortion and to the destructive messages of hate that arise from Holocaust denial and distortion."; and

Whereas, while recognizing those states that by law require schools to teach students about the Holocaust, the Never Again Education Act finds that "more schools and teachers, including those in underserved communities, can and should deliver quality Holocaust education."; and



Whereas, to that end, the Never Again Education Act provides for the development and dissemination of accurate, relevant, and accessible digital and other resources to promote understanding about how and why the Holocaust happened, along with the development, dissemination, and implementation of principles of sound pedagogy and best practices for educators for teaching about the Holocaust, and the encouragement of the adoption of resources supported by that Act into curricula across diverse disciplines to educate individuals on the lessons of the Holocaust as a means to raise awareness about the importance of preventing genocide, hate, and bigotry against any group of people; Now, therefore, The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known as the "Gizella Abramson Holocaust Education Act."

SECTION 2. The General Assembly finds that knowledge of the Holocaust is essential to provide students with the fundamental understanding of geography, history, and political systems necessary to make informed choices on issues that affect individuals, communities, states, and nations.

SECTION 3. Part 1 of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-81.57. Education on the Holocaust and genocide.

(a) The State Board of Education shall review the middle school and high school standard course of study and, in consultation and coordination with the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, shall (i) integrate into English, social studies courses, and other courses as appropriate, education on the Holocaust and genocide and (ii) develop a curriculum for a Holocaust Studies elective that may be offered in middle schools and high schools of local school administrative units.

(b) The Department of Public Instruction shall provide or cause to be provided curriculum content, and local boards of education shall provide or cause to be provided professional development to ensure that the intent and provisions of this section are effectively implemented. The North Carolina Council on the Holocaust and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching may, in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction and local boards of education, provide curriculum content and professional development.

(c) The State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction shall review resources and programs developed pursuant to the Never Again Education Act (P.L. 116-141) in satisfying their obligations under this section.

(d) For any standards, curriculum content, professional development, or other materials developed pursuant to this section, the following terms shall be utilized and defined consistent with their definitions in Section 3 of the Never Again Education Act (P.L. 116-141):

(1) Antisemitism.

(2) Holocaust.

(3) Holocaust denial and distortion."

SECTION 4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction the sum of (i) two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and (ii) two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to be used to acquire curriculum content and to implement professional development addressing the Holocaust and genocide in consultation with the State Board of Education, the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching.

SECTION 5. This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.