

2018 -- H 8185

LC005632

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

HOUSE RESOLUTION

STRONGLY SUPPORTING HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND'S SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Representatives Knight, Regunberg, Ackerman, Kazarian, and Morgan

Date Introduced: May 10, 2018

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, In 2016, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and the Armenian
2 community spearheaded the drive to amend the Rhode Island General Laws in order to require
3 more comprehensive and inclusive educational requirements on the subjects of Holocaust and
4 Genocide; and

5 WHEREAS, Resultantly, House Bill 7488 SUB A and Senate Bill 2396 SUB A were
6 passed by the General Assembly and subsequently signed into law by the Governor on June 17,
7 2016; and

8 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's law now requires the Rhode Island Board of Education to
9 include instruction on the subjects of Holocaust and Genocide studies in an appropriate place in
10 the curriculum, for all middle and high school students; and

11 WHEREAS, Rhode Island and Michigan were two of the first states to enact legislation
12 mandating such education subsequently, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, California,
13 Indiana, and Pennsylvania have passed laws requiring some form of Holocaust and Genocide
14 Education, and Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts,
15 Virginia and a dozen other states have committed to enacting similar legislation; and

16 WHEREAS, The Holocaust is defined as the destruction of six million European Jews by
17 the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Genocide is defined as "acts committed
18 with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" and "... a
19 series of purposeful actions by a perpetrator(s) to destroy a collectivity through mass or selective

1 murders of group members and suppressing the biological and social reproduction of the
2 collectivity"; and

3 WHEREAS, Holocaust and Genocide Education seeks to enhance education, cultural
4 production, and public memory about the incidence of these atrocities – in the distant and not-so-
5 distant past. Educators must embrace the teaching and study of the topic and students must be
6 motivated to employ critical thinking skills; and

7 WHEREAS, Holocaust and Genocide Education has additional prevalence in that it
8 demonstrates what can happen when bullying, hate speech, and other forms of intimidation, often
9 faced by today's students, are allowed to escalate into stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and worse;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, It is essential to our state and our nation that we educate our youth about the
12 millions of men, women and children who have and continue to be slaughtered and ostracized
13 simply because of their beliefs and their heritage, or their strengths or their frailties, and we must
14 firmly avow that the atrocities of the Holocaust and Genocide will never be repeated; now,
15 therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
17 Providence Plantations hereby strongly supports Holocaust and Genocide Education in Rhode
18 Island's schools, reaffirms our pledge to work to eradicate bigotry, prejudice, brutality and
19 injustice, and urges Rhode Island educators and students to learn about and learn from these
20 atrocities so they may never blight our world again; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
22 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Commissioner of the Rhode Island
23 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Rhode Island Holocaust Museum, the
24 Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island, the Armenian
25 Assembly of America in Washington, and the Armenian National Committee in Washington.

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