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## **SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Senator Connie Leyva, Chair**

**2021 - 2022 Regular**

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**Bill No:** SB 693

**Hearing Date:** April 14, 2021

**Author:** Stern

**Version:** April 5, 2021

**Urgency:** No

**Fiscal:** Yes

**Consultant:** Brandon Darnell

**Subject:** Pupil instruction: genocide education: the Holocaust

### **SUMMARY**

This bill (1) establishes the Governor's Council on Genocide and Holocaust Education and requires the council to develop best practices to facilitate the instruction on genocide and the Holocaust, identify available resources that are aligned to the best practices, and identify programs and resources to train teachers to provide education on genocide and the Holocaust; and (2) requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to make available the best practices and approved lessons, resources, and materials to support the integration of instruction on genocide and the Holocaust, and to conduct a voluntary study to assess the impact of the instruction based on the best practices.

### **BACKGROUND**

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) as an advisory body to the State Board of Education (SBE). The IQC is an advisory body to the SBE and is responsible for recommending curriculum frameworks, developing criteria for the evaluation of instructional materials, and evaluating and recommending adoption of instructional materials. (Education Code § 33530 and § 60204)
- 2) Requires the IQC to consider incorporating into the history-social science framework content on specific historical events, including the Armenian, Cambodian, Darfur, and Rwandan genocides and the Great Irish Famine of 1845 to 1850. Existing law also encourages CDE to incorporate into curriculum resources for teachers, age-appropriate materials on the Armenian, Cambodian, Darfur, and Rwandan genocides. (EC § 51226.3)

### **ANALYSIS**

This bill (1) establishes the Governor's Council on Genocide and Holocaust Education and requires the council to develop best practices to facilitate the instruction on genocide and the Holocaust, identify available resources that are aligned to the best practices, and identify programs and resources to train teachers to provide education on genocide and the Holocaust; and (2) requires the CDE to make available the best practices and approved lessons, resources, and materials to support the integration of instruction on genocide and the Holocaust, and to conduct a voluntary study to assess the impact of the instruction based on the best practices. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Establishes the Governor's Council on Genocide and Holocaust Education and requires the council to be responsible for coordinating efforts between the CDE and individuals and organizations that are experts in the field of education on genocide, including the Holocaust.
- 2) Requires the council to consist of 17 members appointed by the Governor, who have particular interest or expertise on genocide, including the Holocaust, and to serve without compensation. However, if funding is available for this purpose from private sources, members of the council may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as members of the council.
- 3) Requires the council to develop best practices to facilitate the instruction on genocide, including the Holocaust, that aligns with academic content standards for pupils who are enrolled in grades 4 to 12, inclusive, and the offering of instruction that is appropriate for pupils who are enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive.
- 4) Requires the council to develop a process to identify available resources, and work with CDE to establish new resources, that align with the best practices developed by the council, academic content standards, and the history-social science curriculum framework.
- 5) States that the Legislature strongly encourages school districts and charter schools with pupils in grades 4 to 12, inclusive, to integrate the best practices into instruction on genocide, including the Holocaust, that meets existing academic content standards and the history-social science curriculum framework for these pupils.
- 6) Requires the best practices developed by the council to encourage innovation, equity, accessibility, and flexibility, and respect diversity, leading to instruction for pupils that complies with all of the following:
  - a) Is age appropriate.
  - b) Is sequential or thematic in its method of study.
  - c) Communicates the connection between national, ethnic, racial, or religious intolerance and following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group:
    - i) Killing members of the group.
    - ii) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.
    - iii) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about, in whole or in part, its physical destruction.
    - iv) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

- v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
- d) Communicates the impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the context of the subjects described in (c) above.
- e) Includes the use of personal narratives and multimedia primary source materials, including video testimony, photographs, artwork, diary entries, letters, government documents, maps, and poems as sources of knowledge and inquiry.
- f) Uses appropriate tools and innovative learning modes to encourage inquiry, social emotional development, respect for others, critical thinking, and empathy.
- g) Provides opportunities and skills to consider the relationships between historical and contemporary experiences, including opportunities to contextualize and analyze patterns of human behavior by individuals and groups, at the local, state, national, and international level.
- h) Stimulates pupils' reflection on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in democratic societies to combat misinformation, indifference, and discrimination by developing critical thinking skills and using tools of resistance, including protest, reform, and celebration.
- i) Provides opportunities to reflect on the importance of remembrance, including opportunities to honor the memories of genocide survivors and their cultural legacies.
- j) Is designed to do all of the following, where appropriate:
  - i) Prepare pupils to confront the immorality of genocide, the Holocaust, and other crimes against humanity, such as events in Nanjing, China, and Japanese internment camps during World War II, and to reflect on the causes of related historical events.
  - ii) Address the breadth of the history of the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship, concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials, and other genocides perpetrated against humanity, including, but not limited to, the Armenian Genocide, the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and other genocides committed in Africa, Asia, Latin America, South America, and Europe.
  - iii) Develop pupils' respect for cultural diversity and help pupils gain insight into the importance of the protection of international human rights for all people.

- iv) Promote pupils' understanding of how the Holocaust contributed to the need for the term "genocide" and led to international legislation that recognized genocide as a crime.
- 7) Requires the council to work in consultation with the CDE and organizations and individuals that provide educational expertise and resources related to education on genocide, including the Holocaust, to align the best practices with academic content standards and frameworks.
- 8) Requires the best practices to, among other things, suggest the minimum amount of instruction necessary to adequately educate pupils on genocide, including the Holocaust
- 9) Requires the CDE to distribute information on appropriate curriculum materials and guidelines to school districts and charter schools, and to make available the best practices and approved lessons, resources, and materials to support the integration of instruction on genocide, including the Holocaust.
- 10) Requires the council to work with the CDE to provide resources to school districts and charter schools so they may incorporate the best practices on teaching genocide, including the Holocaust, into their accredited in-service training programs.
- 11) Requires the council to do all of the following:
- a) Identify, to the extent possible, all sources of strategies and content for providing and enhancing education on genocide, including the Holocaust, to pupils.
  - b) Convene working groups comprised of individuals and organizations with significant expertise in the field of education on genocide, including the Holocaust, to advise the council. The working groups shall include certificated public school teachers.
  - c) Advise the Superintendent of Public Instruction and school districts and charter schools on strategies and content for providing and enhancing genocide and Holocaust education for teacher training and to pupils.
  - d) Identify, to the extent possible, all programs and resources to train teachers to provide education on genocide, including the Holocaust, to pupils and share these programs and resources with the SPI, school districts, and charter schools.
  - e) Coordinate with the CDE on the identification of resources for purposes of the bill.
  - f) Explore the opportunity to develop best practices for instruction of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive.

- g) Promote, within school districts, charter schools, and the general population of the state, implementation of education on genocide, including the Holocaust.
  - h) Work with the CDE to establish a small grants program to foster cooperation and innovation among teachers and schools to develop strategies to apply the best practices effectively. Individuals or schools receiving a grant shall be required to participate in an impact evaluation study, developed by the CDE, to assess best practices and implementation of the grant.
  - i) On or before January 1, 2028, and each January 1 thereafter, submit an annual report to the Legislature on the status of education on genocide, including the Holocaust, in the state.
  - j) Develop professional development recommendations for teaching the topic of genocide, including the Holocaust.
- 12) Requires the CDE to provide a professional development program for teaching the topic of genocide, including the Holocaust, to school districts and charter schools. The Legislature strongly encourages school districts and charter schools to provide genocide professional development programs to teachers.
- 13) To the extent permitted by the California Constitution, authorizes the CDE to provide guidelines, in-service training, and any other materials developed in accordance with this section to a private school maintaining any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive, in the state, upon receiving a request from the private school.
- 14) Requires the CDE to conduct a study on the manner in which instruction on genocide, including the Holocaust, is offered pursuant to this bill to assess the impact of the instruction. Participation of a school district or charter school in the study must be voluntary. In conducting the study, a school district and charter school participating in the study that is providing instruction pursuant to the best practices shall provide the CDE with information on whether the school district and charter school offers the instruction and the manner in which the instruction is offered. On or before January 1, 2027, and each January 1 thereafter, the CDE shall submit a report to the Governor and appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature that includes all of the following information for the previous school year:
- a) The number of school districts and charter schools that offered instruction on genocide, including, the Holocaust.
  - b) The number of school districts and charter schools that used the curriculum materials and guidelines distributed by the CDE.
  - c) The number of school districts and charter schools that provided professional development teacher training programs pursuant to the bill.

- d) A description of the manner in which school districts and charter schools provided instruction on genocide, including the Holocaust, including the number of hours of instruction offered, the grade levels in which the instruction was provided, and the courses in which the instruction was provided.
- e) Recommendations for improvements to the offering of instruction on genocide, including the Holocaust, including recommendations for legislation.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author's office, "A recent study by Schoen Cooperman Research surveyed 11,000 Millennials and Gen-Z Americans across 50 states to look at the state of Holocaust knowledge as well as the perceptions of the Holocaust.
  - Almost 2/3rds of young American adults do not know that 6 million Jews and 5 million others were killed during the Holocaust.
  - More than 1 in 10 believe Jews caused the Holocaust.
  - Of adults aged between 18 and 39, almost half (48%) could not name a single concentration camp or ghetto established during World War.
  - 23% believed the Holocaust was a myth, or had been exaggerated, or they weren't sure.
  - 12% said they had definitely not heard, or didn't think they had heard, about the Holocaust.
  - 49% had seen Holocaust denial or distortion posts on social media or elsewhere online.
  - Only an estimated 54% of the entire world population has even heard of the Holocaust.
  - 19% of American adults say, 'Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust.'

"This bill intends to fill the Holocaust education gap by providing resources and best practices materials to teachers. This will ensure all California students have receive robust Holocaust and genocide best practices within existing curriculum standards and the social studies framework."

- 2) **Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.** AB 2016 (Alejo, Ch. 327, Stats. 2016) required the IQC to develop, and the SBE to adopt, an ethnic studies model curriculum. The development process elicited controversy, as there were concerns over which groups the ethnic studies model curriculum would ultimately include, and on some of the specifics within the initial draft. After public comment

periods and a revision, CDE ultimately recommended that the model curriculum increase the breadth and depth of the four foundational disciplines of ethnic studies—African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicana/o/x Latina/o/x Studies, and Native American Studies. Additionally, the CDE proposed updating and expanding an existing set of resources—where all sample lessons are housed—to further reflect California's diversity by offering instructional materials that raise the voices of many identities whose experiences intersect with the core disciplines of ethnic studies, such as Arab Americans, Armenian Americans, Jewish Americans, and Sikh Americans. The model curriculum and additional sample lessons were adopted by the SBE on March 18, 2021.

- 3) ***Existing resources on genocide and the Holocaust.*** The Holocaust and other genocides are currently referenced in several CDE curriculum documents, including (1) the Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide, which was originally developed in 1987, is posted on the CDE website as a PDF file, and addresses the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan Genocides; and (2) the History–Social Science Framework, which underwent a major revision in 2016 and contains extensive content on the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and mentions several other examples of genocide. Genocide is also addressed in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that was recently adopted development. *The committee may wish to consider whether the best practices developed by the council could ultimately be duplicative resources.*

## SUPPORT

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist of America  
Israeli-American Civic Action Network  
Simon Wiesenthal Center

## OPPOSITION

None received

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