

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 472 (Stern) – As Amended May 7, 2025

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) establish the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program to provide direct allocations to local educational agencies (LEAs), subject to an appropriation, to support Holocaust and genocide education and professional learning.

Additionally, the bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to issue a notice to all local educational agencies serving students in any of grades 7 through 12 regarding the inclusion of Holocaust and genocide education within the adopted History-Social Science Content Standards and Framework adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). The bill also authorizes the CDE to issue a survey to LEAs on the status of Holocaust and genocide instruction at their schools.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures likely in the in the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars for the Legislature to provide an appropriation for the grant program.
- 2) One-time General Fund costs of approximately \$794,000 per year for two years for the CDE to hire additional staff to develop the survey, analyze and report survey data, and develop and administer the grant program.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

In light of growing incidents of hate and discrimination, it has become more critical than ever to ensure that students are equipped with a full understanding of historical atrocities like the Holocaust and other genocides. California's recent efforts to address the gaps in Holocaust and genocide education reflect the urgency of this issue. By introducing Senate Bill 472, I am championing a forward-thinking approach to combat intolerance by mandating both funding for school districts and a system for evaluating educational outcomes. This bill stands as a crucial step toward fostering empathy, promoting awareness, and preventing the repetition of past injustices. It is a vital investment in the education of future generations, ensuring they are

not only informed but also empowered to create a more just and compassionate society.

- 2) **Background.** In 2021, the Governor launched the Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education and charged it with assessing the status of Holocaust and genocide education in California schools, making recommendations and promoting best practices for how to improve Holocaust and genocide education, and sponsoring Holocaust and genocide remembrance. Senator Henry Stern, Attorney General Rob Bonta, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, and Dr. Anita Friedman, Executive Director, Jewish Family and Children's Services/Northern California all co-chair the Council. The Council's general membership is made up of four elected officials as well as nine academics, advocates, and community organizations representing groups impacted by the Holocaust and genocide throughout history. In January 2025, the Council released a report in partnership with WestEd examining the current landscape of Holocaust and genocide education implementation across LEAs. Per the report, "the findings show that while some districts have developed robust programs, the overall landscape remains fragmented, with success often dependent on individual educator initiative." The report contained several recommendations. This bill codifies one of the recommendations by establishing a Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program to provide direct allocations to LEAs for the purposes of providing Holocaust and genocide education and professional learning. Allowable uses for the funds include: providing instructional materials on topics about the Holocaust and genocide, financing teacher attendance at professional development opportunities focused on Holocaust and genocide education, and hiring substitute teachers to support teacher attendance at professional development opportunities focused on Holocaust and genocide education.

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