

## SENATE THIRD READING

SB 472 (Stern)

As Amended May 7, 2025

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to establish the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program to provide direct allocations to local education agencies (LEAs) for the purposes of providing Holocaust and genocide education and professional training; requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to issue a notice to LEAs serving students in grades 7 to 12, clarifying that social science instruction is designed to provide a foundation for the understanding of human rights issues with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust; and authorizes the CDE to issue a survey to LEAs, no more than two years after the notice, on the status of Holocaust and genocide instruction at their schools.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Requires the CDE to issue a notice to all LEAs serving students in any of grades 7 to 12 clarifying that social science instruction specified in the course of study for grades 7 to 12 is designed to provide a foundation for the understanding of human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust. Requires the notice to advise LEAs of all of the following:
  - a) Holocaust and genocide education are part of the adopted History-Social Science Content Standards and Framework adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE); and
  - b) The History-Social Science Framework adopted by the SBE provides information about instruction on the Holocaust and genocide.
- 2) Requires the CDE to include in the notice information about the existing resources available to support LEAs and teachers in the instruction of Holocaust and genocide education.
- 3) Authorizes the CDE to issue a survey to these LEAs, no more than two years after the notice is issued, on the status of Holocaust and genocide instruction at their schools.
- 4) Requires the SPI to establish the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program to provide direct allocations to LEAs for the purposes of providing Holocaust and genocide education and professional development on Holocaust and genocide education.
- 5) Requires that grants provided under the program be used to provide resources and opportunities related to Holocaust and genocide education, which may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
  - a) Providing instructional materials on topics about the Holocaust and genocide;
  - b) Hosting an event or an organization at a schoolsite for purposes related to Holocaust or genocide education;

- c) Financing teacher attendance at professional development opportunities focused on Holocaust and genocide education;
  - d) Hiring substitute teachers to support teacher attendance at professional development opportunities focused on Holocaust and genocide education;
  - e) Financing faculty and staff time to plan and facilitate LEA or school-based programs related to Holocaust and genocide education; and
  - f) Financing transportation to events and educational opportunities related to Holocaust and genocide education.
- 6) Requires the SPI to adopt detailed regulations for the grant program, including, but not limited to, programmatic details, application criteria and deadlines, and reporting requirements on how allocations were spent.
- 7) Establishes the Holocaust and Genocide Education Grant Program Fund in the State Treasury, and states that moneys in the fund shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the SPI for purposes of the grant program.
- 8) Establishes the following definitions for purposes of the act:
- a) "Genocide" means, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, 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; or
    - v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
  - b) "Holocaust," as described by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of 6,000,000 European Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators; the Nazis also targeted other groups for persecution and murder, including Roma, people with disabilities, some Slavic peoples, especially Poles and Russians, Black people, communists, socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, gay men, and people the Nazis called "asocials" and "professional criminals;" and
  - c) "Local educational agency" means a school district, county office of education, or charter school.

## COMMENTS

***Governor's Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education report.*** In 2021, Governor Newsom established the Governor's Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education. The Council was tasked with equipping California educators and students with tools to recognize and address antisemitism, racism, bigotry, and other forms of hate through education and empathy. To support this mission, the Council commissioned a statewide study to examine the current landscape of Holocaust and genocide education implementation across LEAs.

In 2025, the Council released a report based on this survey, which was completed by 559 respondents representing 29% of California LEAs. The study found that:

- While some districts have developed robust programs, the overall landscape remains fragmented, with success often dependent on individual educator initiative. LEA representatives emphasized the need for state-level support—ultimately pointing to the necessity of a systematic, state-supported approach to ensure the kind of equitable, high-quality Holocaust and genocide education statewide that the Council envisions.
- 26% (143 respondents) had a Holocaust and genocide education system in place. Of these, 72% (104 respondents) indicated that their programs are required, and 16% (23 respondents) said they are optional. City-designated and large LEAs were most likely to have established programs.
- Major barriers to providing this instruction included insufficient time for curriculum development, lack of appropriate resources, and lack of community resources. The majority of respondents (450) said their LEA did not provide professional development focused on Holocaust and genocide education. COEs emphasized the need for expanded instructional supports, professional learning opportunities, and community connections, especially in regions with fewer local resources.

The report made the following recommendations:

- Communicate California's vision for Holocaust and genocide education;
- Revise the California History–Social Science content standards;
- Revise the History–Social Science Framework;
- Update, distribute, and provide guidance for the Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide;
- Continue to create a vetted central clearinghouse for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional learning;
- Increase direct funding to districts and schools for Holocaust and genocide education;
- Expand existing statewide professional learning on Holocaust and genocide education
- Monitor and evaluate educational outcomes;
- Continue to conduct additional research to inform the Council's future actions; and
- Expand, publicize, and strengthen the role of the Governor's Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education.

***Existing state instructional resources on genocide.*** According to the Senate Education Committee, content on genocide is included in a number of state curriculum documents, including:

- The Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide, which was originally developed in 1987, is posted on the CDE website, and addresses the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan Genocides;
- The History–Social Science Framework adopted in 2016 contains extensive content on the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and mentions several other examples of genocide;
- The History-Social Science content standards, adopted in 1998, include standards relating to the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide in grades 10;
- Genocide is addressed in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum adopted in 2021; and
- The Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum, currently under development, will contain content related to the Cambodian genocide.

#### **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 positive 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."

#### **Arguments in Support**

The Jewish Public Affairs Committee writes, "California first mandated Holocaust and Genocide Education (HGE) in 1985. Yet a landmark 2025 report by the Governor's Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education found that only 26% of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) currently offer any form of genocide education. Over 80% of LEAs surveyed reported that they do not provide professional development for educators on these topics, citing barriers such as a lack of training, instructional resources, and dedicated time.

SB 472 will address these challenges by establishing a grant program within the California Department of Education to provide direct funding to LEAs for Holocaust and genocide instruction. Grant funds may be used to support instructional materials, professional development, curriculum planning, transportation to educational events, and other direct expenses. In addition, SB 472 will require all LEAs – regardless of whether they receive funding – to submit an annual report documenting their implementation of HGE, creating new accountability and insight into statewide compliance.

This bill is urgently needed. Since October 7th, there has been a historic surge in antisemitism on California campuses – with Jewish students reporting harassment, threats, classroom bias, and

administrative inaction. According to the Anti-Defamation League, 2023 saw the highest number of antisemitic incidents in the U.S. since tracking began in 1979 – a 140% increase over the previous year. But antisemitism does not occur in a vacuum. The same climate of hate also targets AAPI, Black, Latino, LGBTQ+, Muslim, and immigrant students. HGE is not just a history lesson – it's an antidote to contemporary hate, equipping students to recognize dangerous patterns and stand up to injustice in all its forms."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (SF Bay Area) writes, "SB 472 is part of a multi-year anti-Ethnic Studies, anti-Palestine legislative campaign that aligns with the Trump administration's attacks on all social justice education. It is part of the strategy that includes AB 1468, which attempts to police Ethnic Studies curriculum from Sacramento and to gut local control over Ethnic Studies content.

This legislation is not about thoughtful, age-appropriate education about genocide. It is a Trojan horse for pro-Israeli organizations to control critical discussion of genocide, particularly the current genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. It will cede even more power and money to the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education, which is dominated by pro-Israeli forces, not educators. The mandate for the collaborative centers the Nazi Holocaust, ignoring or minimizing many other significant genocides.

Supporters of SB 472 conflate education about the Nazi Holocaust with support for Israel, and discussion of Israel's actions in Palestine with antisemitism. But opposition to Israel has nothing to do with antisemitism. Antisemitism is hatred of, discrimination against or stereotypes about Jews because of their religion, culture, and/or appearance. Israel is a state with policies and actions that California's students have a right to examine through a variety of lenses, just as they would examine the policies and actions of the United States, China, or any other country."

### **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures likely 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.

### **VOTES**

#### **SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1**

**YES:** Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNERney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Reyes

**ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0**

**YES:** Muratsuchi, Hoover, Addis, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Patel

**ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0**

**YES:** Wicks, Sanchez, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Ahrens, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

**UPDATED**

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