

LB888 Add the Holocaust and other acts of genocide to Nebraska's existing statute that requires multicultural education in public schools

Nebraska's existing multicultural curriculum

Currently, NE Rev. Stat. § 79-719 requires Nebraska schools to create a multicultural education curriculum that includes the culture, history, and contributions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. LB888 would expand this definition to include the Holocaust and other acts of genocide.

Knowledge of the Holocaust among youth is declining

In a 2020 survey of millennials and Gen Z by the American Jewish Council, 63% percent of respondents did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and over half of those thought the death toll was fewer than 2 million. Additionally, in one of the most disturbing revelations, the survey noted that 11 percent of respondents believe Jews caused the Holocaust [1]. In a different 2018 survey, 66% of millennials were unable to identify what Auschwitz was [2].

Antisemitism still exists the in the United States

In the 2021 American Jewish Council survey of Americans Jews, 1 in 4 American Jews have reported being the target of antisemitism within the past year, and 4 in 10 have changed their behavior within the past year out of fear over antisemitism[3]. According to FBI statistics, nearly 60 percent of all religiously motivated hate crimes are directed at Jews, who make up two percent of the U.S. population [4].

The increase in anti-semitism combined with our youth's fleeting knowledge of the Holocaust paints a troubling picture, and underscores the need to ensure that Nebraska students are aware of the consequences of unchecked hate, ignorance, and discrimination.

US citizens overwhelmingly support Holocaust education

In 2018, polling showed that 93 percent of US residents supported the idea that all students should learn about the Holocaust at school [5]. Furthermore, survivors of the Holocaust have been consistent in urging the world to remember what happened [6].

23 states currently have curriculums that include Holocaust education, the first of which was California in 1985, and most recently, Arkansas, which passed a requirement last year [7].

[1] NBC News, *Survey finds 'shocking' lack of Holocaust knowledge among millennials and Gen Z*, 2020 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/survey-finds-shocking-lack-holocaust-knowledge-among-millennials-gen-z-n1240031>

[2] The New York Times, *Holocaust Is Fading From Memory, Survey Finds*, 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/us/holocaust-education.html>

[3] AJC, *The State of Antisemitism*, 2021 <https://www.ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2021>

[4] AJC, *AJC Deeply Troubled by FBI Hate Crimes Data Showing Overall Increase, Jews Most-Targeted Religious Group*, 2021 <https://www.ajc.org/news/ajc-deeply-troubled-by-fbi-hate-crimes-data-showing-overall-increase-jews-most-targeted>

[5] The New York Times, *Holocaust Is Fading From Memory, Survey Finds*, 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/us/holocaust-education.html>

[6] NPR, *75 Years After Auschwitz Liberation, Survivors Urge World To Remember*, 2020 <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/27/798480937/75-years-after-auschwitz-liberation-survivors-urge-world-to-remember>

[7] United States Holocaust Memorial, *Where Holocaust Education is Required in the US* <https://www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals/where-holocaust-education-is-required-in-the-us>