

2016 -- S 2396 SUBSTITUTE A

LC004684/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Goldin, Miller, Raptakis, and Gallo

Date Introduced: February 11, 2016

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The title of Chapter 16-93 of the General Laws entitled "Genocide
2 Education in Secondary Schools" [see Title 16 Chapter 97 – The Rhode Island Board of
3 Education Act] is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 ~~CHAPTER 16-93~~

5 ~~GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS [See Title 16 Chapter 97 – The Rhode
6 Island Board of Education Act]~~

7 CHAPTER 16-93

8 HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS [See Title 16
9 Chapter 97 – The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]

10 SECTION 2. Sections 16-93-1, 16-93-2 and 16-93-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-
11 93 entitled "Genocide Education in Secondary Schools [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode
12 Island Board of Education Act]" are hereby amended to read as follows:

13 **16-93-1. Legislative findings.** -- The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

14 (1) On November 4, 1988 the United States government ratified the International
15 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("Genocide
16 Convention") which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Upon
17 ratification, the United States government recognized that throughout all periods of history,
18 genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and was convinced that, in order to liberate
19 mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation was required.

1 (2) The United States government recognizes that genocide still continues, today, in the
2 twenty- first (21st) century. The United States Congress passed House Con. Resolution 467,
3 "Declaring genocide in Darfur, Sudan" on July 22, 2004. On September 9, 2004, the United
4 States Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the United States Senate Foreign Relations
5 Committee that "genocide has occurred and may still be occurring in Darfur. Additionally,
6 President George W. Bush affirmed the Secretary of State's finding on September 21, 2004, when
7 he addressed the United Nations General Assembly by saying: "At this hour, the world is
8 witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my
9 government has concluded are genocide."

10 (3) The United States Department of Education says "education is primarily a State and
11 local responsibility in the United States. It is States and communities, as well as public and
12 private organizations of all kinds that establish schools and college and develop curricula ..."

13 (4) The State of Rhode Island also has previously demonstrated its concerns and interests
14 regarding raising awareness on ~~subject~~ [the subjects](#) of [holocaust and](#) genocide.

15 (i) In 2000, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill no. 7397 "genocide and
16 human rights education," requiring the Rhode Island department of education to "develop
17 curricular material on genocide and human rights issues and guidelines for the teaching of that
18 material."

19 (ii) In 2007, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill No. 5142, requiring the
20 state investment commission to divest its assets from targeted companies in Sudan.

21 [\(iii\) In 2011, the state of Rhode Island enacted an act entitled "Genocide Education in](#)
22 [Secondary Schools" \(Chapters 45 and 70 of the Public Laws of 2011\) which emphasized a need](#)
23 [to adhere to making genocide curriculum materials available including, but not limited to, the](#)
24 [Holocaust, Armenia, Cambodia, and Darfur.](#)

25 [\(iv\) The general assembly has passed a number of resolutions condemning the Holocaust.](#)

26 [\(v\) The general assembly, on the 100th commemoration of the Armenian mass killings,](#)
27 [declared it a genocide. \(Resolution No. 198 passed by the house of representatives at its January](#)
28 [session A.D. 2015 and approved April 8, 2015 entitled "House Resolution Proclaiming April 24,](#)
29 [2015, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the Armenian Genocide of](#)
30 [1915 to 1923 and in Honor of Armenian-Americans" and Resolution No. 834 passed by the](#)
31 [senate at its January session A.D. 2015 and approved April 15, 2015 entitled "Senate Resolution](#)
32 [Proclaiming April 24, 2015, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the](#)
33 [Armenian Genocide of 1915 to 1923 and in Honor of Armenian-Americans".\)](#)

34 [\(vi\) The governor, legislators, and community leaders attended and participated at the](#)

1 [Holocaust memorial dedication in 2015 whereby a need was recognized for education on the](#)
2 [topic of holocaust and genocide in Rhode Island schools.](#)

3 (5) The establishment of free public education in the United States is intended to prepare
4 citizens for participation in American social, economic, and political activities.

5 (6) The State of Rhode Island has also previously demonstrated its concerns for civic
6 education, of which genocide education should be a component. In 2005, the general assembly
7 directed the board of regents for elementary and secondary education to develop and adopt a set
8 of grade level standards in civic education by August 31, 2007.

9 (7) Given the importance of the issue of genocide to the political affairs of the United
10 States, as well as the responsibility of the state to educate its citizens, it is a fundamental
11 responsibility of the State of Rhode Island to ensure that the critical subject of genocide is
12 included as part of the curriculum in all public schools.

13 (8) It is the judgment of the Rhode Island general assembly ~~to encourage~~ that ~~every~~ [the](#)
14 board of education in the state shall include instruction on the ~~subject~~ [subjects](#) of [holocaust and](#)
15 [genocide studies where](#) ~~in an~~ appropriate ~~place~~ in the curriculum, for all middle and high school
16 students.

17 **16-93-2. Definitions.** -- For the purpose of this chapter, the following words shall have
18 the following meanings:

19 (1) "Genocide," as defined by the Genocide Convention: "means" any of the following
20 acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious
21 group, such as: (i) Killing members of the group; (ii) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to
22 members of the group; (iii) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to
23 bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (iv) Imposing measures intended to
24 prevent births within the group and/or; (v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another
25 group.

26 [\(2\) "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and](#)
27 [murder of approximately six million \(6,000,000\) Jews and five million \(5,000,000\) other](#)
28 [individuals by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.](#)

29 **16-93-3. Powers and duties.** – The state shall adhere to the following procedures:

30 (1) The department of education shall [collect and disseminate to every school district,](#)
31 [private school, mayoral academy and charter school, and](#) make available on its website
32 curriculum materials and such other materials as may assist local and regional school committees,
33 [and governing bodies of any private school, mayoral academy or charter school,](#) in developing
34 instructional ~~programs pursuant to this section~~ [materials on holocaust and genocide awareness](#)

1 and education. The curriculum materials may include information on relevant genocides,
2 including the Holocaust, Armenia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, and Darfur.

3 (2) Every school district shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction on holocaust
4 and genocide, utilizing, but not being limited to, the materials collected and disseminated by the
5 department of education, commencing with the 2017-2018 school year. Nothing herein shall
6 require school districts to require holocaust and genocide instruction in every year of middle
7 school and high school, but that holocaust and genocide education and instruction shall be
8 utilized during appropriate times in the middle school and/or high school curricula, as determined
9 by the local authority. All students should have received instruction on genocide and holocaust
10 awareness materials by the time they have graduated from high school.

11 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION

- 1 This act would require the inclusion of instruction on holocaust and genocide studies in
- 2 the curriculum for all middle and high school students.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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