

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

H.294

Introduced by Representatives Patt of Worcester, Anthony of Barre City,
Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of
Westminster, Boyden of Cambridge, Chapin of East
Montpelier, Dodge of Essex, Elder of Starksboro, Farlice-Rubio
of Barnet, Graning of Jericho, Howard of Rutland City,
Masland of Thetford, McFaun of Barre Town, Morrissey of
Bennington, Roberts of Halifax, Satcowitz of Randolph,
Stebbins of Burlington, and Troiano of Stannard

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; Holocaust education

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require
Vermont public schools to include Holocaust education in supervisory union-
wide curricula for grades six through 12 each year, beginning in the 2024–
2025 school year. This bill also proposes to require the Agency of Education
to provide assistance in the development and maintenance of Holocaust
education.

An act relating to Holocaust education in public schools

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

3 This act may be cited as the “Vermont Holocaust Studies Act.”

4 Sec. 2. FINDINGS

5 (a) The Vermont General Assembly finds and declares that per the Never
6 Again Education Act, Pub. L. No. 116-141, enacted by the U.S. Congress on
7 May 29, 2020, “the United States works to promote Holocaust education as a
8 means to understand the importance of democratic principles, use and abuse of
9 power, and to raise awareness about the importance of genocide prevention
10 today.”

11 (b) According to the Anti-Defamation League, over the past decade there
12 has been a marked surge in antisemitic and racist violence in the United States
13 and Europe.

14 (c) Education is key to combating hate. By learning about the Holocaust,
15 students will understand how stereotypes, prejudice, and religious and ethnic
16 hatred can escalate to atrocity. The lessons of the Holocaust not only teach
17 about the past but also shape our future as a human race. Students must
18 understand that it happened and it can happen again.

19 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 914 is added to read:

20 § 914. HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

1 (a) Each supervisory union shall ensure a minimum of six hours of age-
2 and grade-appropriate instruction on the Holocaust is included in the union-
3 wide curricula each year for grades six through 12. The instruction shall be
4 integrated within the global citizenship or English language arts content areas.
5 Instruction may also be integrated into other content areas.

6 (b) Instruction required under this section shall be designed to:

7 (1) enable students to evaluate the morality of the Holocaust and to
8 reflect on the causes of related historical events;

9 (2) help students gain insight into the importance of the protection of
10 international human rights for all persons;

11 (3) promote students' understanding of how the Holocaust revealed the
12 need for the term genocide and led to international legislation that recognized
13 genocide as a crime;

14 (4) stimulate students' reflection on the roles and responsibilities of
15 citizens in democratic societies to combat misinformation, indifference, and
16 discrimination through tools such as nonviolent protest, reform, or social and
17 cultural movements;

18 (5) provide students with opportunities to contextualize and analyze
19 patterns of behavior by individuals and groups who belong in one or more
20 categories, including perpetrator, collaborator, bystander, upstander, victim,
21 and rescuer;

1 (6) enable students to understand the ramifications of prejudice, racism,
2 and stereotyping;

3 (7) preserve the memories of Holocaust survivors and provide
4 opportunities for students to discuss and honor survivors' legacies;

5 (8) provide students with a foundation for examining the history of
6 discrimination; and

7 (9) explore the various mechanisms of transitional and restorative justice
8 that helped humanity move forward in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

9 (c) The Agency of Education shall provide technical assistance to
10 supervisory unions and school districts for the purpose of providing the
11 instruction required by this section. The assistance shall:

12 (1) identify sources, strategies, and content for providing and enhancing
13 Holocaust education to students;

14 (2) advise superintendents and headmasters of approved independent
15 schools in Vermont on strategies and content for Holocaust education;

16 (3) identify programs and sources of professional development related to
17 providing Holocaust education;

18 (4) promote in schools and to the general population of Vermont
19 implementation of Holocaust education; and

20 (5) carry out any other tasks it considers to be advisable to support the
21 ability of the State to meet the goals of providing Holocaust education.

1 (d) As used in this section:

2 (1) “Genocide” means any of the following acts committed with intent
3 to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group:

4 (A) killing members of the group;

5 (B) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

6 (C) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to
7 bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

8 (D) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

9 or

10 (E) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

11 (2) “Holocaust” means the systemic, bureaucratic, and state-sponsored
12 persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews and millions of
13 other individuals, including Polish, Roma, disabled, and homosexual
14 individuals, by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

15 Sec. 4. TRANSITION

16 Holocaust studies shall be included in public school curricula for the 2024–
17 2025 school year.

18 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.