



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0014-2022, **Version:** *

Res. No. 14

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.121-A/A.472-A, authorizing the Commissioner of Education to conduct a study regarding courses of study on the Holocaust within the state.

By Council Members Velázquez, Dinowitz, Menin, Louis, Joseph, Ung and Vernikov

Whereas, January 2022 commemorated the 77th anniversary of the Holocaust, marked by the liberation of the concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz; and

Whereas, The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, and state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators; and

Whereas, The Nazi regime also targeted and killed members of other minority groups such as people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, and Slavic peoples, as well as political opponents, opposition forces, and others; and

Whereas, In its effort to extinguish Jewish culture and fundamentally change humanity, the Nazi regime established over 44,000 concentration camps and ghettos between 1933 and 1945 to detain people in harsh conditions, force labor, and perpetrate mass murder; and

Whereas, The horrors of the Holocaust carry important lessons about humanity, politics, and justice, including the importance of the concepts of democracy, dictatorship, propaganda, xenophobia, and genocide; and

Whereas, In 2020, the Claims Conference, a Jewish organization, published the results of a 50-state survey on Millennial and Gen Z knowledge of the Holocaust, revealing that 63 percent of survey respondents did not know that six million Jews were murdered and 36 percent thought that “two million or fewer Jews”

were killed during the Holocaust; and

Whereas, In addition to the surprisingly unfortunate results, New York tested amongst the lowest Holocaust knowledge states, with 58 percent of Millennial and Gen Z participants unable to identify a single concentration camp or ghetto; and

Whereas, The New York Times reported in 2018 that the Holocaust is fading from memory, raising concern about what is possible in the present; and

Whereas, In 2021, the Anti-Defamation League tracked a 75 percent spike in antisemitic incidents in the United States, including assaults, vandalism, harassment, and hate speech; and

Whereas, As recently as January 17, 2022, a 44-year-old British national held four people hostage inside of a Jewish synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, resulting in an 11-hour standoff according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

Whereas, The week beginning on January 27 has ceremonially been attributed to a citywide week of Holocaust Education throughout New York City's schools, fostering empathy between City residents and school-age children who learn of this significant historical event and the impacts it has had on the present-day world; and

Whereas, To ensure these education efforts continue, New York State Senator Anna Kaplan introduced S.121-A, along with its companion bill, A.472-A, sponsored by New York State Assembly Member Nily Rozic, directing the Commissioner of the New York State Education Department to conduct a study and put forth recommendations to ensure instruction on the Holocaust is provided at all schools within the state; and

Whereas, When discussing this legislation, Assembly Member Nily Rozic expressed her concerns, stating "It is imperative that we teach our students the dangers of anti-Semitic attitudes and actions and that we teach them how to combat Holocaust distortion and trivialization....to make it clear that hate has no place in New York - past, present, or future"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass,

and the Governor to sign, S.121A/A.472A, authorizing the Commissioner of Education to conduct a study regarding courses of study on the Holocaust within the state.

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