

Date of Hearing: June 26, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
SB 1277 (Stern) – As Amended May 16, 2024

SENATE VOTE:

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: genocide education: the Holocaust

SUMMARY: Establishes the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education (Collaborative) to be responsible for establishing a statewide teacher professional development program on genocide, including the Holocaust. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Collaborative, to be responsible for establishing a statewide teacher professional development program on genocide, including the Holocaust, for school district, county office of education (COE), and charter school teachers.
- 2) Requires the Collaborative, under the direction of the California Department of Education (CDE), to consist of leading genocide and Holocaust education organizations and institutions, genocide survivors, and community leaders.
- 3) States that the Collaborative's mission is to ensure that genocide, including the Holocaust, education is taught consistent with the current content standards, curriculum frameworks, and instructional materials adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) and any other requirements of the Education Code, in ways that are interdisciplinary and age-appropriate to students of different grade levels.
- 4) Requires that the Collaborative, in addition to focusing on education regarding the Holocaust and the genocides of the Armenian, Bosnian, Cambodian, Guatemalan, Indigenous American, Rwandan, and Uyghur peoples, focus on education to identify and confront anti-Semitism and hate in modern society.
- 5) Establishes the duties of the Collaborative to include, but not be limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Distributing grants to genocide and Holocaust education organizations and institutions to provide teacher training programs, and developing innovative academic standards-based curricula and digital tools, consistent with the purposes of this section;
 - b) Creating a robust digital library of lesson plans and resources on genocide, including the Holocaust, that align with the academic standards, distributing these lesson plans to school districts, COEs, and charter schools statewide, and supporting teachers with the successful implementation of the lesson plans through workshops, conferences, and digital tools;
 - c) Organizing statewide and regional workshops, and providing participating teachers with transportation and accommodation;

- d) Launching and maintaining a website that serves as a central hub for sharing the latest educational resources, including curricula and other materials, and best practices on genocide education to provide access to all California teachers of students in any of grades 6 to 12, and increasing the use of high-quality resources, in school districts, COEs, and charter schools;
 - e) Evaluating the implementation and administration annually to assess the degree to which teachers' efficacy in teaching about genocide, including the Holocaust, has improved, and the mission of the Collaborative has been met; and
 - f) Providing, as determined by the CDE, annual verbal or written reports to the CDE and the Legislature, on the Collaborative's achievement of its mission.
- 6) Establishes the following definitions:
- a) "Collaborative" means the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education; and
 - b) "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;
 - v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group; and
 - vi) "Holocaust" means, as described by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of 6 million European Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators.
- 7) Makes implementation contingent upon an appropriation for its purposes in the annual Budget Act or another statute.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Students in grades 7-12 studying social sciences must learn about human rights issues, including genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust. (Education Code (EC) 51220)
- 2) Requires the CDE to incorporate into publications that provide examples of curriculum resources materials developed by publishers of nonfiction, trade books, and primary sources, or other public or private organizations that are age appropriate and consistent with the

subject frameworks on History and Social Science that deal with civil rights, human rights violations, genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust. (EC 51226.3 (a))

- 3) Encourages all state and local professional development activities to provide teachers with content background and resources to assist them in teaching about civil rights, human rights violations, genocide, slavery, the Armenian Genocide, and the Holocaust. (EC 51226.3 (c))
- 4) Encourages all of the following:
 - a) Instruction in the origins of genocide as a phenomenon throughout history that continues to the present day;
 - b) Content providers and teachers to promote pupil analysis of genocide, including the ethnic, religious, and political causes;
 - c) Content providers and teachers to incorporate instructional materials for pupils that examine the possible means of preventing and halting genocide policies or interventions by the United Nations, other groups of nations, or the United States; and
 - d) Examinations of interventions to prevent genocide should include arguments and evidence for and against intervention, the role of public support for the intervention, and the possible consequences of such interventions. (EC 51226.4)
- 5) Requires that instruction in Social Sciences include the early history of California and a study of the role and contributions of people of all genders, Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, persons with disabilities, and members of other ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic status groups, to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States, with particular emphasis on portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society. (EC 51204.5)
- 6) Requires, when adopting instructional materials for use in the schools, governing boards to include only instructional materials that, in their determination, accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society, including the role and contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, persons with disabilities, and members of other ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic status groups to the total development of California and the United States. (EC 60040(b))

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- The bill's requirement to establish the Collaborative in statute would be contingent upon an appropriation, resulting in General Fund cost pressures in the hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to support its existence on a permanent basis. This estimate is based on the amount that the Collaborative has received in recent years. However, depending on how the Collaborative's duties are implemented such as the number and size of grants that are distributed to teacher training programs as well as the frequency of statewide and regional workshops, the costs could be higher.

- The California Department of Education (CDE) indicates that convening the Collaborative and overseeing its work to develop curricular resources and establish a statewide teacher professional development program and train teachers “in every school district, county office of education, and charter school, on an ongoing basis” in Holocaust and genocide education would likely require the work of 2.0 positions and General Fund costs of \$293,000 each year. There could be additional, unknown staffing costs for CDE depending on whether it would need to absorb any operational or administrative costs for the Collaborative which is unclear based on the existing language. The bill currently provides that the Collaborative is “under the direction of the State Department of Education.”

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “As hate incidents surge in California schools, addressing this disheartening trend is imperative. As a Jewish senator and author of SB 1277, I advocate for standardized teacher training in Holocaust and genocide education statewide. The Teachers Collaborative equips educators with vital knowledge and tools, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and historical understanding. This effort combats hate and fosters inclusivity. SB 1277 enables teachers to handle incidents with restorative justice, guiding students and staff through issues instead of resorting to unexplained disciplinary actions. Together, we build a more compassionate society, one that confronts hate through education and understanding.”

The California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education. This bill proposes to codify California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education.

The Collaborative was established the Collaborative in 2021 with a \$1.9 million appropriation in the state budget. In the 2023-24 budget, the Legislature included \$1.5 million in additional funding for the Collaborative. The Legislative budget for 2024-25 includes an additional \$2 million for the Collaborative.

The Collaborative works in close partnership with the Governor’s Council for Holocaust and Genocide Education in a statewide effort to elevate this education. According to the author, research demonstrates that young people who receive Holocaust education report a deeper understanding of the Jewish community, a more pluralistic attitude, and a greater willingness to challenge intolerant behavior in others. The Collaborative goals include:

- To create new, standards-aligned lessons on the Holocaust and genocide for all 6-12th grade students in California;
- To empower and unify educators in teaching the lessons of history and about what happens when bias goes unchecked; and
- To combat rising antisemitism and hate by creating more respectful and empathetic next generations.

The Collaborative plans to launch a new website to hold a library of best-practice curriculum material from members of the Collaborative, available for use in all California schools.

According to the author, to date, the Collaborative has organized two statewide conferences for educators, as well as regional professional development workshops with participants from local educational agencies (LEAs), independent and parochial schools, and university pre-service teacher programs.

Members are creating a library of California Common Core-aligned lesson plans, distributing these materials statewide, and supporting teachers in implementing the curricula through workshops, conferences, and digital tools. The Collaborative has distributed grant funds to members to develop this curricula and provide teacher training, and is in the process of developing a website to serve as a central hub for sharing high quality instructional resources on Holocaust and genocide education. According to materials provided by the author:

- The Collaborative has reached 1,164 teachers from 155 California public school districts and dozens of parochial and independent schools through statewide teacher institutes, and regional teacher workshops.
- The Collaborative has collectively produced more than 40 new curricula that align with the State Board of Education Adopted California Common Core State Standards.
- To date, CA Collaborative partners have hosted 45 regional and virtual teacher workshops. The following are some outcomes from the regional workshops:
- The Anti-Defamation League has facilitated 13 regional and virtual workshops over the past 12 months. Per teacher surveys, 96% report an increased knowledge of the Holocaust; 96% report an increased knowledge of antisemitism; and 97% report an increase in effective practices to teach about the Holocaust.
- Redbud Resource group has taught five regional and virtual workshops. Per teacher surveys, 90% of teachers who participated left feeling confident to teach about the California Indian Genocide.
- 87% of teachers participating in California Teachers Collaborative programs report an increased knowledge and confidence in implementing lessons on the Holocaust and patterns of genocide in their classrooms.

By 2027, the Collaborative plans to train 8,500 teachers through professional development workshops and institutes, serve all California school districts with students in grades 6-12, and reach 1,062,500 California students.

The Collaborative reports that an estimated 17% of those participating in CA Collaborative programs are educators working in California independent and parochial schools. An estimated 3% teach in CA Institutions of Higher Education. *The Committee may wish to consider* that this bill establishes the Collaborative specifically to serve public school teachers (employed by school districts, COEs, and charter schools).

Existing resources on genocide. 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.

Arguments in support. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) writes, “Since 1985, the State of California has required Holocaust and genocide education to be taught in public schools, as stated in California Education Code Section 51220. While the code mandates that all school districts incorporate age-appropriate lessons about the Holocaust and genocide, no systematic teacher training on the subject matter currently exists.

Moreover, Holocaust and genocide education changes the lives of students in numerous constructive ways. Multiple surveys have found that the positive outcomes for high school students not only reflect gains in historical knowledge, but also manifest in cultivating more empathetic, tolerant, and engaged students generally. The results also indicate that exposure to Holocaust survivor testimony is strongly associated with numerous positive outcomes in early adulthood. For example, these students develop more pluralistic attitudes, are 27% more likely to recognize the dangers of antisemitism, 28% more likely to challenge incorrect or biased information, report a greater willingness to confront intolerant behavior in others, and are more likely (50%) to offer help when presented with a bullying scenario. In an era where preserving the memory of the Holocaust is becoming paramount, as more and more survivors who experienced the Holocaust first-hand are passing away, ADL’s research suggests that Holocaust learning also plays an important role in combatting antisemitism.

While the data is clear that Holocaust and genocide education increases empathy, openness to differing viewpoints, critical thinking skills, and comfortability with the ‘other,’ it can also backfire when taught improperly. Therefore, it is vital that educators be trained by subject matter experts who are also expert in instructional best practices. SB 1277 will enable the state to train teachers in every LEA and standardize training and best practices to achieve the most effective results. In doing so, it will also set a high standard that other states can follow. Under the purview of the California Department of Education, the Collaborative will focus on the Holocaust and genocides of the Indigenous American, Guatemalan, Rwandan, Armenian, Bosnian, Cambodian, and Uyghur peoples, as well as identify and confront hate and antisemitism in present-day society.”

Arguments in opposition. Jewish Voice for Peace, California writes, “While we recognize the worthy intent of the bill to further formalize education on what genocide is and why it is wrong,

this bill enshrines a group dominated by private Israel-aligned organizations as the authority on grades 7-12 genocide education.

The majority of the 14 organizations in the Collaborative are primarily or exclusively focused on the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and most of them are political partisans for Israel. The remaining organizations are respectively associated with the subject matter of seven other genocides.

SB 1277, proposed Education Code § 51221.1, leaves out any reference to ‘human rights’ or ‘slavery’ as part of genocide education. Of the many references to “genocide” in the proposed new section, almost every one is followed by ‘the Holocaust’ as the example of that term. Subsection (a)(4) is devoted entirely to a definition of the Holocaust, which is the only genocide that is defined. Similarly, the only form of ‘hate’ that is specified is ‘anti-semitism.’ Subsection (e) lists the names of seven genocides other than the Holocaust to be included in genocide education, without further explanation. This list comports with genocides that the Collaborative members specialize in.

Genocide education in California must not be framed to meet the political biases and composition of a particular Collaborative positioning itself to be the statewide authority in this crucial area of study.”

Recommended Committee amendments. In recognition that the list of genocides included in the measure is not exhaustive, ***staff recommends that the bill be amended*** as shown below:

51221.1(e): In addition to focusing on education regarding the Holocaust and ~~the other~~ genocides including but not limited to those of the Armenian, Bosnian, Cambodian, Guatemalan, Indigenous American, Rwandan, and Uyghur peoples, the collaborative shall focus on education to identify and confront anti-Semitism and hate in modern society.

Related Legislation. SB 693 (Stern) of the 2021-22 Session would have 1) established the Governor’s Council on Genocide and Holocaust Education and required the council to develop best practices to facilitate the instruction on genocide and the Holocaust, identify available resources that are aligned to the best practices, and identify programs and resources to train teachers to provide education on genocide and the Holocaust; and 2) required the CDE to make available the best practices and approved lessons, resources, and materials to support the integration of instruction on genocide and the Holocaust, and to conduct a voluntary study to assess the impact of the instruction based on the best practices. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 141 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 194, Statutes of 2023, appropriated \$1.5 million to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) for allocation to the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education to continue work developing and providing curriculum resources related to genocide and Holocaust education; and providing professional development, including educator trainings, on genocide and Holocaust education.

AB 130 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021, appropriated \$2 million to the SPI for allocation to the Marin County Office of Education to contract with nonprofit organizations with subject matter expertise in genocide and Holocaust education to develop and provide

curriculum resources related to genocide and Holocaust education; and provide professional development, including educator trainings, on genocide and Holocaust education.

SB 895 (Nguyen) Chapter 686, Statutes of 2018, requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to develop and submit to the SBE, on or before December 31, 2022, and the SBE to adopt, modify, or revise, on or before March 31, 2023, a model curriculum relative to the Vietnamese American refugee experience, a model curriculum relative to the Cambodian genocide, and a model curriculum in Hmong history and cultural studies for use in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.

AB 1399 (Nazarian) of the 2017-18 Session would have created a recognition of study in genocide, atrocities, and human rights teacher education program which could have been offered as part of an initial teacher preparation program or as a separate program for teachers who possess a valid single subject teaching credential. The Governor vetoed this bill with the following message:

The State Board of Education has already recognized the study of genocide and human rights in California's History-Social Science Framework. This framework specifically includes the subject of the Armenian Genocide.

In addition, the 2017 Budget Act includes \$10 million of professional development and training for teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals on the Framework, which will include the Armenian Genocide.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

30 Years After
American Jewish Committee, San Francisco
American Jewish Committee, Los Angeles
American Jewish Committee, San Diego
Anti Defamation League
Avenues for Change: Holocaust and Genocide Education
California State PTA
California Teachers Association
Cambodian Genocide Resource Center
Central Valley Holocaust Educators' Network
Democrats for Israel - California
Democrats for Israel Los Angeles
ETTA
Facing History and Ourselves
Hadassah
HIAS
Hillel of San Diego
Hillel of Silicon Valley
Holocaust Museum Los Angeles
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund

Jewish Community Relations Council, Bay Area
Jewish Community Relations Council, Sacramento
Jewish Community Relations Council, Santa Barbara
Jewish Democratic Club of Marin
Jewish Democratic Club of Solano County
Jewish Democratic Club of the Bay Area
Jewish Democratic Coalition of the Bay Area
Jewish Democrats of San Diego County
Jewish Family and Community Services East Bay
Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center Genocide Survivors
Jewish Family and Children's Services of Long Beach and Orange County
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Services of San Francisco
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys
Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region
Jewish Free Loan Association
Jewish Long Beach
Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation
Jewish Public Affairs Committee
Jewish Silicon Valley
JVS SoCal
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles Unified School District
Marin County Office of Education
Progressive Zionists of California
Raoul Wallenberg Jewish Democratic Club
Redbud Resource Group
StandWithUs Holocaust Education Center
The Genocide Education Project
2 individuals

Oppose

Jewish Voice for Peace California
Jewish Voice for Peace, Bay Area Chapter

Analysis Prepared by: Tanya Lieberman / ED. / (916) 319-2087