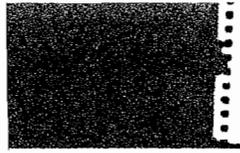


Public Hearing Testimony Speaker: ^{Danielle} Millard

Date: 2/29/08 Bill Number: 5595



Testimony of Danielle Millard
Field Organizer, CT Teach against Genocide Campaign
To the Education Committee, Connecticut General Assembly
29 February 2008

Chairman Senator Gaffey, Chairman Representative Fleischmann, and members of the committee, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today in regards to the Genocide Awareness Education Bill:

My name is Danielle Millard and I am a field organizer for the CT Teach against Genocide Campaign. I live in Mystic and am working towards my Masters degree in Social Work at the University of CT. While I am a graduate of Stonington High School I also lived in Stratford for part of my high school career and spent elementary and middle school in New Milford. As you can see I have attended numerous schools across the state and have valued all of the education I received. However, the one thing that was missing from my education was the immensely important subject of genocide.

There are schools across the state that have taken a lead role in teaching about genocide, but there are still too many schools that do not incorporate this subject into their curriculum. The students in our schools today should not be deprived of this important piece of history and, sadly, current events. The bill the CT Teach against Genocide Campaign is striving to pass would (1) have the Connecticut Department of Education include the subject of genocide in the curricula of secondary schools, and (2) provide teachers with training and materials. The bill will build on the Connecticut Holocaust Education Act of 1995, and ensure that all future generations of students will have the opportunity to learn about genocides, so that they may help prevent future ones.

Over the past few months working on this campaign I have met countless teachers, students, religious leaders, and community members who feel just as passionately about ending and preventing genocide as I do. On our lobby day last Tuesday we had representatives from 14 schools, most of whom came in during their school break week, to show their support for this campaign. I have come in contact with a few of the 498 teachers from our state who, on their own time and with their own money, attended the Facing History and Ourselves Teacher Training on this very topic. This shows there is both a demand and a need and the state should address that by providing teachers with the appropriate trainings.

When contacting students and teachers from various schools from around the state I was inspired by how many not only gave their support to this campaign, but became advocates on this bill's behalf, sending petitions around their school, contacting their legislators, and much more. There were a few who hesitated to support the bill. They expressed concern over the idea of adding in a whole new course; however, once we explained how our bill is only a guideline similar to other social studies standards and that teachers maintain the control to teach this how they want, their concern turned to support.

As I stand here today, over 200,000 people have already died in Darfur. The number of people who will die in this and future genocides will only grow if we do not take immediate action to change the ideology that leads to genocide. By passing a bill that requires, with funding, that the subject of genocide be taught you have the ability to make a lasting impact on the students in our state as well as all those who will continue to be affected by their activism. Thank you for this opportunity to share my views with you. I am open to any questions.