

Testimony of Jason Wang
Communications Associate, CT Teach Against Genocide
Student at University of Connecticut
Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
February 29, 2008

Chairman Senator Gaffey, Chairman Representative Fleischmann, and Members of the Committee, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today at this hearing on the Genocide Awareness Education bill.

The course in Genocide and Human Behavior at Avon High School taught me a side of history--and humanity--that I had never known. I had never imagined how deeply political silence and dehumanization could ravage a society. Instead of simply reciting death tolls and displaying horrific images, our teacher focused on the human side of genocide—first-hand accounts of Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda, as well as the causes of genocide. This approach gave me a depth of understanding and compassion that could have never been achieved through the current history curriculum. Not only did I learn about these events, but I gained an appreciation for the power of political action which could have prevented these events and saved lives.

The lessons learned in Genocide and Human Behavior have been a lasting, positive influence in my life. I have learned how indifference can breed hate, and so I am reminded to respect the humanity of others regardless of differences. I have learned to become a more politically and socially active, informed citizen. Since taking this course, I have been involved with many human rights groups including Amnesty International, STAND, and now Teach Against Genocide. I truly believe that by teaching genocide in a meaningful way, students will be motivated to act upon their own values and make a difference in the world. We would be providing the future generation of leaders with the tools to address not only genocide, but all of the challenges we face as a society. This is why comprehensive, funded genocide education needs to be a part of every student's education in Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am prepared to answer any questions.

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker: Jason Wang

Date: 2/29/08 Bill Number: 5595