

Testimony

bill number **6499-AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES**

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Here is my testimony in favor of bill 6499.

I am proud to live in a state that is accepting and tolerant of people from all ethnicities, cultures, and sexual orientations. Our community leaders are educated and worldly resulting in an environment that is enlightened and accepting. We need to guarantee that the generations that follow have the opportunity to learn from the painful lessons of history. One of the worst demonstrations of prejudice, intolerance, denigration, and incomprehensible atrocities is the Holocaust. This was a calculated murder of six million Jews solely because of their religion and an additional 5 million people because of other prejudices. The lessons from this despicable act of genocide are relevant today and will remain so in the future. The living witnesses of this horrific event are dying everyday, therefore making it all the more important to educate and inform our young people and future generations.

Ignorance is the leading cause of intolerance, hatred and violent acts. It is incumbent upon us, the generation that learned first hand about these seemingly unbelievable atrocities, to teach the valuable lessons from this most painful piece of history. Today, we still see prejudice against people of all cultures, ethnicities, and sexual orientation. Therefore, informing our students about the Holocaust and genocide is not just important, **it is essential**. The most critical people to teach are the people least likely to be exposed to the knowledge of these events. Therefore mandating the education

of the Holocaust and genocide in our public schools is the best way to ensure Connecticut's young people will remain knowledgeable and tolerant and not accept bigotry and violence. They will be the voices of acceptance and righteousness.

I am a Town Councilor and chair of the Finance and Budget committee in West Hartford. As a result, I am keenly aware of the impact of unfunded mandates on municipal budgets. They have become a real stress to our budgets and I would be extremely hesitant, as I hope all legislators are, to support an unfunded mandate in these extremely challenging financial times. This mandate is different. The resources available are plentiful nationally and within our own state. The experiences of the other states that have enacted similar legislation is that the cost is negligible. We have assurances from the JFACT (Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut) that resources will be made available so that no cost will be added to current school budgets to incorporate this piece into the curriculum.

Who wouldn't want to enrich our students lives with the lessons of tolerance, open-mindedness, and history for no additional cost? This surely is a "no brainer".