

Testimony in Support of SB - 438

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Please accept this testimony in support of SB – 438 proposing that April be recognized as Connecticut Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.

My name is Katherine Marren; I am currently a senior at Keene State College majoring in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. I was one of the two students involved with the passing of House Bill 1444 in New Hampshire, making April Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Month for the state. New Hampshire has greatly benefited from Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Month, and I am sure that it will continue to. New Hampshire, through Keene State College's Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide studies, has implemented a Holocaust and Genocide Awareness education program in all public schools. The education program includes a Holocaust and Genocide Awareness themed video contest. The contest began in 2015 under the theme of Raphael Lemkin – A New Conscience for Humanity. Many different middle schools and high schools from all over New Hampshire submitted, and included Holocaust and Genocide Awareness activities into their curriculums. The theme of this year's video contest is putting a face to the targets of genocide, and many schools plan on submitting videos and discussing this topic. Governor of New Hampshire, Margaret Hassan, said that Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Month would help to combat the dangers of intolerance and hatred. Holocaust and Genocide Awareness month in New Hampshire has helped start a conversation across the entire state on issues of intolerance and genocide, I am sure that Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month will do the same in Connecticut.

The state of Connecticut has a long history with not only genocide awareness but genocide prevention as well. With larger refugee populations arriving in the U.S. conversations on the dangers of intolerance and hate are even more important. The Human Rights Institute, at the University of Connecticut, has been working since 2001 on issues of genocide prevention and genocide awareness. The Institute educates scholars and students not only throughout the University of Connecticut system but also on a national level. Throughout the state of Connecticut, Holocaust survivors visit classrooms, to educate students about the dangers of intolerance and to raise awareness about genocide. An official Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month would help the efforts of these survivors and centers in the future to carry on with this education. Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month would help start a state wide dialogue on the dangers of evil and genocide, and inspire initiatives of genocide prevention across all of Connecticut. The state of New Hampshire has greatly benefited from similar legislation, in both the community and in schools. Through this awareness month Connecticut will be able to create more aware, active and educated communities in the face of genocide, and therefore a more aware, active and educated state.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katherine Marren