AN ACT
RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, Regunberg, Ackerman, Corvese, and Nunes

Date Introduced: February 05, 2016

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. The title of Chapter 16-93 of the General Laws entitled "Genocide Education in Secondary Schools" [see Title 16 Chapter 97 – The Rhode Island Board of Education Act] is hereby amended to read as follows:

CHAPTER 16-93

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS [See Title 16 Chapter 97 – The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]

CHAPTER 16-93

HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS [See Title 16 Chapter 97 – The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]

SECTION 2. Sections 16-93-1, 16-93-2 and 16-93-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-93 entitled "Genocide Education in Secondary Schools [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" are hereby amended to read as follows:

16-93-1. Legislative findings. -- The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(1) On November 4, 1988 the United States government ratified the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("Genocide Convention") which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Upon ratification, the United States government recognized that throughout all periods of history, genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and was convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation was required.
(2) The United States government recognizes that genocide still continues, today, in the
twenty-first (21st) century. The United States Congress passed House Con. Resolution 467,
States Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the United States Senate Foreign Relations
Committee that "genocide has occurred and may still be occurring in Darfur. Additionally,
President George W. Bush affirmed the Secretary of State's finding on September 21, 2004, when
he addressed the United Nations General Assembly by saying: "At this hour, the world is
witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my
government has concluded are genocide."

(3) The United States Department of Education says "education is primarily a State and
local responsibility in the United States. It is States and communities, as well as public and
private organizations of all kinds that establish schools and college and develop curricula ..."

(4) The State of Rhode Island also has previously demonstrated its concerns and interests
regarding raising awareness on the subjects of Holocaust and genocide.

(i) In 2000, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill no. 7397 "genocide and
human rights education," requiring the Rhode Island department of education to "develop
curricular material on genocide and human rights issues and guidelines for the teaching of that
material."

(ii) In 2007, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill No. 5142, requiring the
state investment commission to divest its assets from targeted companies in Sudan.

(iii) In 2011, the state of Rhode Island enacted an act entitled "Genocide Education in
Secondary Schools" (Chapters 45 and 70 of the Public Laws of 2011) which emphasized a need
to adhere to making genocide curriculum materials available including, but not limited to, the
Holocaust, Armenia, Cambodia, and Darfur.

(iv) The general assembly has passed a number of resolutions condemning the Holocaust,
declared it a genocide. (Resolution No. 198 passed by the house of representatives at its January
session A.D. 2015 and approved April 8, 2015 entitled "House Resolution Proclaiming April 24,
2015, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the Armenian Genocide of
1915 to 1923 and in Honor of Armenian-Americans" and Resolution No. 834 passed by the
senate at its January session A.D. 2015 and approved April 15, 2015 entitled "Senate Resolution
Proclaiming April 24, 2015, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the
Armenian Genocide of 1915 to 1923 and in Honor of Armenian-Americans").

(v) The governor, legislators, and community leaders attended and participated at the
Holocaust memorial dedication in 2015 whereby a need was recognized for education on the

(5) The establishment of free public education in the United States is intended to prepare
citizens for participation in American social, economic, and political activities.

(6) The State of Rhode Island has also previously demonstrated its concerns for civic
education, of which genocide education should be a component. In 2005, the general assembly
directed the board of regents for elementary and secondary education to develop and adopt a set

(7) Given the importance of the issue of genocide to the political affairs of the United
States, as well as the responsibility of the state to educate its citizens, it is a fundamental
responsibility of the State of Rhode Island to ensure that the critical subject of genocide is
included as part of the curriculum in all public schools.

(8) It is the judgment of the Rhode Island general assembly to encourage that every the
board of education in the state shall include instruction on the subject subjects of holocaust and
genocide studies where in an appropriate place in the curriculum, for all middle and high school
students.

16-93-2. Definitions. -- For the purpose of this chapter, the following words shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Genocide," as defined by the Genocide Convention: "means" any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as: (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 its physical destruction in whole or in part; (iv) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group and/or; (v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(2) "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million (6,000,000) Jews and five million (5,000,000) other individuals by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

16-93-3. Powers and duties. – The state shall adhere to the following procedures:

(1) The department of education shall make available on its website or via other means curriculum materials and such other materials as may assist local and regional school committees in developing instructional programs pursuant to this section. The curriculum materials may shall include information on relevant genocides, including the Holocaust, and the genocides involving Armenia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, and Darfur.
(2) Every school district shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction on holocaust and genocide, utilizing, but not being limited to, the department of education materials commencing with the school year beginning September 2017.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.
EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION

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1. This act would require the inclusion of instruction on holocaust and genocide studies in the curriculum for all middle and high school students.
2. This act would take effect upon passage.

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