

2016 -- H 7641

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LC004836
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION

Introduced By: Representatives Ackerman, Blazejewski, Regunberg, Amore, and
McNamara

Date Introduced: February 12, 2016

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

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

4 ~~CHAPTER 16-93~~

5 ~~GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS [See Title 16 Chapter 97—The Rhode
6 Island Board of Education Act]~~

7 CHAPTER 16-93

8 HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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

12 **16-93-1. Legislative findings.** -- The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

13 (1) On November 4, 1988 the United States government ratified the International
14 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("Genocide
15 Convention") which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Upon
16 ratification, the United States government recognized that throughout all periods of history,
17 genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and was convinced that, in order to liberate
18 mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation was required.

19 (2) The United States government recognizes that genocide still continues; today, in the

1 twenty- first (21st) century. The United States Congress passed House Con. Resolution 467,
2 "Declaring genocide in Darfur, Sudan" on July 22, 2004. On September 9, 2004, the United
3 States Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the United States Senate Foreign Relations
4 Committee that "genocide has occurred and may still be occurring in Darfur." Additionally,
5 President George W. Bush affirmed the Secretary of State's finding on September 21, 2004, when
6 he addressed the United Nations General Assembly by saying: "At this hour, the world is
7 witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my
8 government has concluded are genocide."

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

13 (4) The State of Rhode Island ~~also~~ has previously demonstrated its ~~concerns and interests~~
14 ~~regarding~~ commitment to raising awareness ~~on-subject~~ of the subjects of the Holocaust and
15 genocide.

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

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

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

26 (iv) The general assembly has passed a number of resolutions condemning the Holocaust.

27 (v) The general assembly, on the 100th commemoration of the Armenian mass killings,
28 declared it a genocide. (Resolution No. 198 passed by the house of representatives at its January
29 session A.D. 2015 and approved April 8, 2015 entitled "House Resolution Proclaiming April 24,
30 2015, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the Armenian Genocide of
31 1915 to 1923 and in Honor of Armenian-Americans" and Resolution No. 834 passed by the
32 senate at its January session A.D. 2015 and approved April 15, 2015 entitled "Senate Resolution
33 Proclaiming April 24, 2015, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" to Commemorate the
34 Armenian Genocide of 1915 to 1923 and in Honor of Armenian-Americans".)

1 (vi) The governor, legislators, and community leaders attended and participated at the
2 Holocaust memorial dedication in 2015, at which a need was recognized for additional education
3 on the topics of the Holocaust and genocide in Rhode Island schools.

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

6 (6) The State of Rhode Island has also previously demonstrated its concerns for civic
7 education, of which genocide education should be a component. In 2005, the general assembly
8 directed the board of regents for elementary and secondary education to develop and adopt a set
9 of grade level standards in civic education by August 31, 2007.

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

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

18 (9) On and after July 1, 2017, all high schools in this state shall, within their curriculum,
19 include instruction on the genocide known as the Holocaust. Each school district or local
20 education agency shall determine the level and duration of instruction to be devoted to the
21 Holocaust education, and incorporate the materials created and provided pursuant to §16-93-3.

22 **16-93-3. Powers and duties.** – The state shall adhere to the following procedures:

23 The department of elementary and secondary education ("the department") shall ~~make~~
24 ~~available on its website curriculum materials and such other materials as may assist local and~~
25 ~~regional school committees in developing instructional programs pursuant to this section.~~ develop
26 and disseminate to every school district in the state, including public and private schools, a copy
27 of the Holocaust/genocide curriculum for each grade in high school. This curriculum shall include
28 educational objectives that would be met through programs and curricula appropriate for each
29 grade. The department shall make available on its website, and through other means, the
30 following:

31 (1) A copy of the Holocaust/genocide curriculum for each grade in high school;

32 (2) Examples of units of instruction on the Holocaust and genocide appropriate for each
33 high school grade; and

34 (3) Examples of curriculum materials and other such materials as may assist local and

1 [regional school committees in developing instructional programs pursuant to this section.](#) The
2 curriculum materials ~~may~~ [shall](#) include information on relevant genocides, including the
3 Holocaust, [and the genocides involving](#) Armenia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, and Darfur.

4 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage and shall apply to all school years
5 commencing on and after July 1, 2017.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION

1 This act would require all high schools in this state to include in their curriculum
2 instruction on the genocide known as the Holocaust and other genocides.

3 This act would take effect upon passage would apply to all school years commencing on
4 and after July 1, 2017.

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