



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

Memorandum

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Brendan Boyle

DATE: January 25, 2012

SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship of Legislation – Holocaust and Genocide Education

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation which will amend the Public School Code of 1949 to require all public and nonpublic schools in the Commonwealth to include in their existing curriculum education regarding the Holocaust and genocide. It is my sincere hope you will join me in this effort.

The Holocaust was the systematic and state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jewish individuals by the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945, as well as millions of other individuals who did not fit into prescribed social norms at that time or who were considered political or religious opponents. This included Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, mentally or physically disabled individuals, Communists, and trade unionists. The crimes committed during the Holocaust severely depleted most European Jewish populations and completely eliminated many Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

The Holocaust occurred as a result of individuals and governments making choices that legalized discrimination and allowed prejudice and hatred to take over a society. As such, it is crucial our young people have an understanding of the implications of the Holocaust and recognize genocide for what it is – the mass murdering of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group – so that history never repeats itself. According to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research, currently five states have enacted laws requiring the teaching of the Holocaust in schools: California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York. My legislation would require all public and nonpublic schools to include in their existing curriculum information regarding the Holocaust and genocide, including a study of Nazi atrocities from 1933 to 1945 and an understanding that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination. The Department of Education will develop a model curriculum that may be used by schools to comply with this act.

If you would like to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation, please contact Kristen Womelsdorf in my Harrisburg office at 717-787-3055 or kwomelsd@pahouse.net.