

I am writing today to support proposed legislation to ensure that Holocaust and Genocide Education and Awareness are included in the Social Studies curriculum in Connecticut.

I am a first generation American, the child of two German Jewish immigrants. Both of my parent's lives were disrupted as the places they called home became no longer safe. At very young ages they witnessed unbelievable events and acts of inhumanity first hand including the loss of family members. Their story continued with new beginnings in New York as they enjoyed all that life could offer. My sister and I were always aware of their past struggles. Our parents instilled the importance of acceptance and tolerance. They shared their story within the community. They engaged with school and youth programs and recorded it so that it would not be lost or forgotten.

Since the end of World War II we've witnessed genocides around the world including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda and Darfur. Closer to home, intolerance continues with events as recent as Charlottesville, VA and desecration of cemeteries right here in Hartford.

It is as critical as ever for our students to learn this history and even more important it needs to be the source of meaningful conversation and dialog. If not, then we will inevitably continue to see this history repeat itself.

Sincerely,

Leah C. Katz
Avon, CT 06001
lckatz@comcast.net