

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 452

An act concerning the inclusion of Holocaust and Genocide Education and Awareness in the Social Studies curriculum. Alan B Lazowski March 14, 2018.

Chairman Fleishman, Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Boucher and members of the education committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of Senate Bill 452, an act concerning the inclusion of Holocaust and Genocide Education and Awareness in the Social Studies curriculum.

My name is Alan Lazowski, Chairman and CEO of LAZ Parking but more importantly for today's conversation I am before you as the son of Rabbi Philip and Ruth Lazowski, both Holocaust survivors who witnessed firsthand the atrocities of the Holocaust. I am fortunate to be on the United States Holocaust Museum Board in Washington D.C. and a member of their education committee. I am also fortunate to be on the Anti-Defamation League CT and National Board as well as recently having been appointed to the NAACP National Board. I am the founding Chairman of a CT organization called Voices of Hope an organization created by descendants of Holocaust survivors throughout the state of CT, to help promote greater understanding of genocide through the voices of survivors and their children.

As you probably already know, acts of racism, Anti-Semitism, hatred and bigotry are on the rise in CT and throughout our country. In 2017 alone, Anti-Semitic incidents have increased by 57%, the largest single year increase on record. Incidents in K-12 schools nearly doubled for the second year in a row.

It is only through education and training that we can end these acts of hatred and prejudice. It is proven that Holocaust and genocide education changes the lives of those both young and old whom have had the chance to experience it.

I have personally been witness and a part of my parents and I speaking to hundreds of thousands of children whose lives and attitudes have changed by what they learned from the lessons of the Holocaust. It is not only learning about what hatred and man's inhumanity to man can lead to, it is also about lessons of courage, resiliency, survival and heroes that risk their lives to save people because they knew it was the right thing to do. Holocaust and genocide education can inspire people to choose a new path and gain compassion and strength.

We must all remember that the Holocaust began slowly. Age old discrimination led to persecution, persecution led to incarceration, incarceration led to annihilation and mass murder and is it only through education that we can teach our students to **Never Forget**. We must all remember that the past informs our present and provides priceless guideposts for our future.

By us acting on Senate Bill 452 we can make a difference in the lives of CT students and make the world we live in a better place. I hope that you all will encourage your colleagues to pass 452, but also to strengthen this Bill and amend the high school requirement statute to include this course of study as a graduation requirement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alan B. Lazowski