

State Rep. Subeck: Senate Education Committee passes Holocaust Education Bill

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MADISON – Today, the Senate Committee on Education passed Senate Bill 69 (SB 69), authored by Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and Representatives Jon Plumer (R-Lodi) and Lisa Subeck (D-Madison). SB 69 requires instruction on the Holocaust and other genocides be incorporated into the social studies curriculum at least once in grades 5 to 8 and at least once in grades 9 to 12 by public school districts, independent charter schools, and private schools participating in a parental choice program.

“I can remember interviewing Holocaust survivors when I was a teenager as part of a youth group project to preserve their stories. While they shared survival stories that were nothing short of heroic, their stories were also those of tragic loss,” said Rep. Subeck. “Unfortunately, today’s children will likely never meet a Holocaust survivor. While they will not have a chance, as I did, to listen to their firsthand stories, it is incumbent upon us to make sure this history is never repeated.”

Anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise in Wisconsin and the United States, and more than a quarter of all recorded anti-Semitic incidents in Wisconsin have taken place among students or on campus. In a recent poll, 22% of millennials said they had never heard of the Holocaust – double the percentage of US adults who said the same.

“Our current era of divisiveness and anti-Semitic activity highlights the need for Holocaust education in our schools,” said Rep. Subeck. “It is time to add Wisconsin

to a growing list of states requiring Holocaust education.”

Sixteen states currently require Holocaust education, and legislation is pending in several others. Wisconsin was on track to join this list of states last year as the same bill passed the Assembly and had a hearing in the Senate. Unfortunately, it was stalled with the start of the pandemic.

The Wisconsin-based Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC) has made a commitment to the state to provide materials and support at no additional cost to schools.

“Thank you to the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center for their commitment to ensuring the Holocaust is never forgotten and never repeated,” said Rep. Subeck. “I am hopeful SB 69 will quickly pass the Senate and Assembly so it can head to Governor Evers’s desk for his signature.”

Representative Lisa Subeck is one of three Jewish legislators in the Wisconsin State Legislature and serves on the board of the National Association of Jewish Legislators. She has represented the 78th Assembly District since 2015, and serves as vice-chair of the Assembly Democratic Caucus.