

Chair Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck, and members of the Committee:

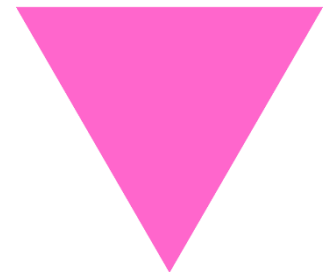
On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of North Dakota, I submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 1527 as it is currently written in regard to requiring Holocaust education in North Dakota's public schools. We strongly suggest amendment before this bill go to the full body of the House Chamber or become law.

The Holocaust is one of the darkest moments of humanity. Education is a vital way to ensure that history does repeat itself in any form or of any magnitude. However, for education to be effective, it must be complete. HB1527 provides an incomplete framework for teaching of the Holocaust. Under 3.d (lines 3-4 on page 2) inclusion of sexual minorities need to be added to create a more historically complete curriculum:

"Connection between national, ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual and gender identity intolerance."

During the Holocaust, the Nazi regime targeted individuals based on sexual and gender identity, particularly gay men and, to a lesser extent, transgender individuals and lesbians. Under Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code, thousands of men accused of homosexuality were arrested, sent to concentration camps, and subjected to forced labor, medical experiments, and execution.

Gay men were marked with pink triangles in camps and were often isolated, brutalized, and denied solidarity from other prisoner groups. Transgender individuals faced persecution under laws criminalizing gender nonconformity, and lesbians, while less systematically targeted, were still subjected to surveillance, imprisonment, and sterilization. The Nazi ideology viewed LGBTQ+ identities as a threat to racial "purity" and social order. After the war, many survivors of this persecution were not recognized as victims, and legal discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in Germany persisted for decades.



The foundation for Nazi persecution of LGBTQ+ individuals was Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code, which criminalized male homosexuality. In 1935, the Nazis expanded Paragraph 175, making even non-sexual acts (such as flirting or being suspected of homosexuality) punishable by imprisonment or concentration camp internment. Between 1933 and 1945, an estimated 100,000 men were arrested for alleged homosexuality, with 50,000 convicted and many sent to camps. Lesbians were not targeted under Paragraph 175 as directly as gay men, but they still faced police raids, forced sterilization, and imprisonment, often labeled as "asocial" or "political enemies."

Gay men deported to camps were forced to wear pink triangle badges, marking them for severe abuse. They were isolated and subjected to inhumane medical experiments, including forced castration and hormone treatments. They were often sexually assaulted, beaten, and murdered by guards and even other prisoners. Mortality rates among pink triangle prisoners were extremely high, estimated at 60% or more in some camps.

While not explicitly targeted under Paragraph 175, Transgender individuals were also persecuted. Nazi policies viewed gender nonconformity as a threat to their rigid gender roles. Some trans people were forcibly detransitioned, subjected to medical experiments, or executed.

The Nazis shut down Berlin’s Institute for Sexual Science in 1933, destroying decades of research on transgender and LGBTQ+ identities.

Following the war, LGBTQ+ survivors of Nazi persecution were not recognized as victims. Many gay men remained imprisoned under Paragraph 175, which remained in German law until 1969. Unlike Jewish Holocaust survivors, gay survivors were denied reparations and recognition. Public acknowledgment of LGBTQ+ persecution during the Holocaust only emerged in the late 20th century, with memorials such as the Pink Triangle Memorial in Berlin (2008). The legacy of this persecution persisted long after the Holocaust, shaping LGBTQ+ activism and the fight for recognition of historical injustices.

When the Nazis seized power in January 1933, they quickly moved to suppress LGBTQ+ communities, especially in Berlin, which had been a hub for LGBTQ+ culture during the Weimar Republic. In February 1933 Police raided and shut down LGBTQ+ bars, nightclubs, and organizations. On May 6, 1933 the Nazis raided and destroyed the Institute for Sexual Science, founded by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, a pioneering researcher on LGBTQ+ identities and transgender healthcare. Thousands of books and research materials were burned. June 30 – July 2, 1934 came to be known as the Night of the Long Knives when the Nazis purged SA leader Ernst Röhm, a high-ranking Nazi official who was openly gay. While the purge was politically motivated, it was also used to justify an intensified crackdown on homosexuality within the Nazi regime. And in 1935, the Nazis expanded Paragraph 175, broadening the definition of homosexual acts and increasing penalties. This led to mass arrests of gay men.

In camps, the pink triangles gay prisoners were forced to wear made them particularly vulnerable to abuse from SS guards and even other prisoners. Many were subjected to forced castration, medical experiments, and extreme forced labor, often in deathly conditions. Mortality rates were exceptionally high, reaching 60% or more in some camps, due to a combination of beatings, medical torture, and executions.



Political | Criminal | Immigrant | Bible Scholar | Homosexual | Asocial

While Jewish people were the primary target, many other ethnic and religious groups suffered persecution, torture, and murder including the Romani and Slavic peoples, Afro-Germans, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Freemasons.

Political Opponents such as Communists, Socialists, Trade Unionists, Anarchists were targeted and sent to camps for forced labor and execution. In the camps LGBTQ+ people were subjected to forced castration, and medical experiments.

The Nazis murdered 250,000–300,000 people with disabilities, including children, through euthanasia, starvation, and forced sterilization. People with physical, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities were considered “life unworthy of life” and killed in gas chambers before the Holocaust's mass exterminations began. And “asocials” (homeless, criminals, sex workers, and

others were arrested and imprisoned and often forced into hard labor or used for medical experiments.

The Holocaust was not just about national, ethnic, racial, or religious persecution—it was a broad campaign of extermination and repression targeting anyone who did not fit the Nazi vision of a “pure” and obedient society. If the legislature is going to require students to learn a prescribed curriculum of the Holocaust, it must be complete to serve as a proper instruction that humanity cannot allow such atrocities to ever happen again – today, tomorrow, or ever.

The ACLU of North Dakota urges the House Education Committee to amend HB1527. Without amendment, we ask for a “do not pass” recommendation.

Submitted by:
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