

2025 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1527

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1527
2/12/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to required Holocaust education.

8:59 a.m. Chairman Heinert called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Discussion Topics:

- Education requirements
- Holocaust History
- Curriculum Requirements vs Standards

8:59 a.m. Representative Maki introduced the bill and submitted testimony. #37345 #37348 #37358

9:04 a.m. Amiee Copas, Executive Director NDCEL, testified in favor.

9:18 a.m. Ruth Jorritsma, ND Resident, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #37248

9:24 a.m. Ron Enget, Pastor, New Life Church, testified in favor.

9:29 a.m. Keth Ritchie, Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church, testified in favor.

9:31 a.m. Bette Grande, ND Resident, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #37309 #37310

9:34 a.m. Jake Bennett, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Israeli- American Coalition for Action, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #37301

9:38 a.m. Andrew Alexis Varvel, ND Resident, testified in opposition and submitted testimony. #37293

9:42 a.m. Cody Schuler, Advocacy Manager, American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, testified in opposition and submitted testimony. #37304

9:50 a.m. Amber Severson, Teacher, Alexander Public Schools, testified in opposition and submitted testimony. #37105

9:53 a.m. Davonne Eldrege, Assistant Director of Academic Support, NDDPI, answered questions for the committee.

Additional written testimony:

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director, ND Family Alliance Legislative Action, submitted testimony in favor. #37251

Nicholas Foertsch, Milnor Public Schools, submitted testimony in opposition. #37164

Barbara Dunn, ND Resident, submitted testimony in favor. #37222

9:59 a.m. Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck closed the hearing.

Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk

Testimony in Opposition to HB1527

Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amber Severson and I am the social studies teacher at Alexander Public School in Alexander. I have been teaching for nearly a decade and have a Master of Arts degree in History. I also teach a dual credit United States History course through Williston State College, which I am able to offer to students in Alexander. I am a lifelong learner of history and a dedicated teacher of it as well.

A law mandating Holocaust education is unnecessary, as North Dakota already includes World War II, including the Holocaust, in its established state standards for North Dakota Studies, United States History, and World History under standards ND.6_12.4, US.6_12.1-6, and WH.6_12.1-6. North Dakota Studies examines how the global impact of WWII affected the state, introducing students to key aspects of the war that lay the foundation for deeper analysis in their World and United States History courses. Additionally, in Problems of Democracy, under standard C.6_12.2, students study different forms of government using historical examples, including WWII, to discuss how such atrocities can occur.

This legislation represents government overreach and a wasteful use of legislative time and resources. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction is the appropriate body to set educational standards, not the state legislature. This entity develops curriculum utilizing the expertise of teachers specialized in each subject area. Who better to shape an inclusive and equitable curriculum than the educators who work directly with these topics?

Furthermore, if a special law is required for the Holocaust, consistency would demand similar legislation for every historical atrocity where groups were systematically targeted. For instance: the Holodomor in Soviet Ukraine, where Stalin's policies caused a forced famine that killed millions in the 1930s; Stalin's Great Purge, a campaign of

political repression that led to the execution or imprisonment of hundreds of thousands in concentration camps; and Stalin's treatment of his own civilians during WWII, where an estimated 6 to 20 million people perished under his rule. Other examples include the Armenian Genocide, where the Ottoman Empire attempted to erase Armenian identity through the systematic extermination of 1.5 million Armenians during WWI; the Rwandan Genocide, where nearly 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were slaughtered in just 100 days due to cultural tensions in the 1990s; and the Cambodian Genocide, in which the Khmer Rouge regime executed, starved, and overworked nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population during the 1970s. These mass atrocities, among countless others throughout history, would all warrant similar legislative action under the same logic. Where would it end?

This is not a question of the Holocaust's importance. It is unquestionably one of history's greatest tragedies and must be studied. However, singling it out for legislative action sets a problematic precedent and distracts from the broader responsibility of ensuring a comprehensive, well-rounded history curriculum; one that is best developed by the experts already entrusted with our educational standards.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

To the Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing regarding HB 1527 related to required Holocaust education. As a high school social studies teacher at Milnor Public School, I understand the importance of educating students about the events of the Holocaust. Whether that be the dangerous rhetoric of antisemitism that seems to be growing in our current day, or the unimaginable horrors that millions of innocent people faced at the hands of truly disgusting individuals. However, I think that the bill is an unnecessary overreach by the state to require the way in which I choose to discuss this topic.

My main concern with this bill is how it intends to add to current North Dakota Standards with how we teach Social Studies in the state. As the bill is currently written, it requires me to teach about the Holocaust in my United States History class. While it does get brought up in my U.S. History teachings about World War II, it is much more of a focus in my World History lessons to help relate it to other horrific events that occurred to civilians in World War II. I also feel that by requiring this in the U.S. History standards, it takes away the role that the other Allies played in helping to liberate various camps, including the role that the Soviet Union played as being the first to encounter these death camps.

Another issue I have with this current phrasing of the bill is how in Section 1, 1c (line 15) “‘Nazi’ means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.” I believe that this is an unnecessary point to make, as we continue to see hate groups around the country and world use the symbols and verbiage of Hitler’s Third Reich to justify their own hatred and bigotry. People who use this to portray their ideals is just as much a ‘Nazi’ as those that supported Adolf Hitler during his regime.

Please vote no on this bill. As a teacher for over five years, I believe that the training I have and the knowledge I’ve gained by working with state standards and curriculum development in my classroom will allow me to make the correct choice in how and when I discuss this material in my own classroom. I know my students. I know my school. I know when it is appropriate to teach tough topics and how to do it. I do believe that this bill is good natured. However, I do not believe it is necessary and should be voted down.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicholas Foertsch

I'm writing to support the passage of HB 1527. I would hope that the importance in both world and U.S. history of the subject of the Holocaust is obvious to those of us who had a good public education. I think the aspects of this major event are addressed fairly well by the requirements listed in the bill and, if they aren't required to be taught in ND schools now, this bill is a good way to make sure that happens. I hope you will support HB 1527.

Good morning, Chairman Heinert, and honorable members of the House Education Committee.

My name is Ruth Jorritsma, and I am a citizen of North Dakota from District 7. I come before you today to request that you render a “Do Pass” on House Bill 1527, requiring Holocaust Education in our schools.

My family has a very personal connection with the Holocaust. During WW2, my mother’s family lived near Amsterdam in The Netherlands. My family had strong beliefs in God. As the Jewish people began to be taken away to camps, my great-grandfather and his family decided that they could not stand idly by. They acted on their faith by creating hiding places on their farm. They then became part of the Dutch underground, helping Jewish refugees attempting to flee the country. They would even drive to Amsterdam to pick up orphaned Jewish children to rescue. The reports vary, but we know that they were able to help over 300 refugees before they were caught.

Many of my family members were taken into custody. Some were released, but we know that at least three of my family members died in concentration camps, including my great-grandfather. A doctor who visited the camp wrote several letters to my grandmother in America. You might expect the letters to be filled with hate, but they were not. My great-grandfather held firmly to his beliefs through his entire time at the camp. He lost his life at the hands of a firing squad. Our story is one of many stories that need to be told to the generations that follow behind us.

The Holocaust was a horrific tragedy. It shows what can happen when one nationality or people group is marginalized and proclaimed to be “less than” and therefore not worthy of the dignity and respect that is due us as humans. Personally, I hold to the Bible’s statements that humans are created in the image of God. I agree with our founding fathers when they said that “*all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*”¹ When those in leadership persuade their citizens that these fundamental beliefs are not true, then abuse, torture, killing, and more become acceptable behaviors.

The Holocaust took the lives of more than 11 million victims. Six million of those victims were Jewish and 5 million were, like my family, non-Jewish victims.² The sheer magnitude of this loss must be remembered and guarded against lest history be repeated. Future generations need to understand what happened and how it happened. The loss extends beyond the current generation. Remember that not only did these people die, but their future generations were lost from this earth as well. That can never be regained.

Students need to learn about these monumental events, so they are equipped to understand how the Holocaust shaped our world, our lives, and our culture. There are many lessons to be learned from this time in history. One concept to teach is compassion. History is not just a series of names

¹ Declaration of Independence, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

² <https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/holocaust-misconceptions/>

and facts and dates. This is about real people like you and me. Compassion was one of the motivators that kept the family pressing on, even after the farm was inspected by Nazi soldiers several times. In fact, it wasn't till the soldiers came back with dogs that the hiding places were uncovered. Without compassion, why would you risk your entire family to save strangers?

My mother recalled and shared with me that she watched her mother weep over the letters received from the camp doctor. Not a tear or two but weeping over her father's current state. It is hard to relate the feelings of history to students without intentional care to do so.

The story is also an opportunity to teach faith. The letters from the doctor indicate that my great-grandfather was a spiritual leader in the camp. When he weakened and got sick, they placed him in the infirmary. Even there, he ministered to others. He was in his late 70s when he was placed in the camp, but his faith sustained him. At his trial, he challenged his captors to think about what they were doing. He encouraged them to repent. They considered releasing him, but he refused to promise not to go back to helping the Jewish people around him.

The story is also an opportunity to teach courage. The day of the final raid, the soldiers descended upon the farm and systematically went through and uncovered the hiding places. One of the farm hands, held off the advance of the Nazi soldiers with his own gun while a few of the Jews were able to flee into the woods to escape. He died where he stood from his gunshot wounds. He had the courage to stand for what was right, despite the cost. That is a rare courage to find.

History is a series of stories. I have always said that if history seems boring, it is because someone isn't telling it right. We need to know our stories, good and not so good. We need to learn from history and grow from its lessons. We need to teach an unselfish love that is willing to weigh the cost and stand for those who cannot stand for themselves. Please encourage the future generations of North Dakota's citizens to learn, to grow and to stand.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions.



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1527

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
February 12, 2025

Dear Chairman Heinert and honorable members of the House Education Committee,

I regret that I am unable to join you today, because, in addition to our organizational support for HB 1527, I have a personal linkage to WWII and atrocities committed on the Jewish people and many others. I feel strongly about this bill.

Our organization believes that God has created life in each of us and that life begins at conception and ends at natural death. For that reason, all people have worth and dignity, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or other characteristics. The right to life is foundational to all other rights, so we always try to engage on bills that support this recognition and support of these values, such as this resolution.

During WWII in occupied The Netherlands, my father and grandfather hid fleeing Jews in a small crawlspace under the floorboards of their bedroom closet in their city flat in The Hague. We found that space 70 years later on a trip to Holland (see picture in appendix). That small space became a lasting testament to our family's protection of Jews during the war. In addition, my grandfather was a military police officer and used his position in the occupied government to create false passports and other documents for Jewish refugees, with the punishment of being shot immediately if found out.

As you can see, our family has a history of helping Jewish people during the Holocaust. Also, during those years, they helped hide other non-Jewish individuals from Nazi searches as well. The Holocaust was much larger than simply a story about Jewish persecution; it included the whole of Western civilization during those years. But the seed of that story is the atrocities committed against the Jewish people.

Let's fast forward to today. According to a Pew Research poll conducted in 2023, 20% of young adults ages 18-29 believe that the holocaust was a myth.¹ We are seeing the rewriting of history by those who would have us forget past atrocities. We cannot let this happen. Please join us in

¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/one-in-five-young-americans-believes-the-holocaust-is-a-myth-poll-finds/>



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

making sure not only the Jews fleeing in WWII are recognized for what happened to them, but also every man, woman, and child who risked their lives to stop the Holocaust.

This bill does not mandate extra hours of curriculum development or classroom time for teachers who already teach about the Holocaust. It's already happening. This bill is for teachers who avoid the Holocaust subject because of personal prejudice or simply ignorance. We certainly do not want to legislate everything that must be taught to our state's students, but neglecting one of the most defining events in the 20th Century is a travesty.

For these reasons, we ask that you render a "DO PASS" on House Bill 1527. Thank you for taking the time to read our testimony and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Mark Jorritsma
Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action



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Appendix



House Education Committee

House Bill 1527

Andrew Alexis Varvel

Written Testimony

February 11, 2025

9:00AM

Chairman Heinert & Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel.

I live in Bismarck.

My opposition to HB 1527, HB 1536, and HB 1569 comes from the same place. This is a defense of local control, aversion to legislative micromanagement, and a principle that teachers should have considerable latitude to interpret statewide educational guidelines.

House Bill 1527 has good intentions. The Holocaust is an important event in world history, and the contemporary rise in anti-Semitism is indeed alarming. That said, each feature of proposed curriculum is problematic, especially as it promotes an emphasis upon Europe.

There have been many massacres due to anti-Semitism throughout history, of which the Holocaust was merely the most successful.

There have been many genocides throughout history, some perpetrated against Jews and some perpetrated against others.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda has much to teach about the role of radio and eugenics in setting the stage for a racial massacre.

The Cambodian genocide by the Khmer Rouge has much to teach about the role of class warfare and xenophobia in mass murder.

And where does mass manslaughter come into play? The written policy of the Jackson administration in 1832 and 1833 to withhold smallpox vaccine from the Mandans and Arikara here was evil.

But was it genocide?

On page 2, lines 5-6, it talks about the “Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United States...”

Yes and no. The United States was not alone. Our alliance was called ***The United Nations***. Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz. And the American military had the option of bombing rail lines into and out of death camps – an option it pointedly did not exercise.

The curriculum in House Bill 1527 is too prescriptive, too intent on imposing a political orthodoxy, and too problematic in general.

Please give House Bill 1527 a **DO NOT PASS** recommendation.

Thank you.

Testimony in Support of North Dakota House Bill 1527
and the amendment to incorporate the International Holocaust Remembrance
Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism

Jake Bennett

Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Israeli-American Coalition for Action

Feb. 12, 2025

Good morning Ms. Chairman, members of the committee,

My name is Jake Bennett.

I serve as Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for the Israeli-American Coalition for Action.

I am the grandson of two Holocaust survivors.

I am also the father of two young Jewish children.

On behalf of my family and my community, I want to thank you for hearing this bill on Holocaust Education. **I am here in support of this bill and of the amendment that adds to it the Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism.**

The American Jewish community has been living through a crisis since the Oct. 7th attacks of 2023.

To put it into focus, in the year before Oct. 7th, there were ‘only’ 3 antisemitism-motivated assaults of Jewish students on US campuses. In contrast, the year following, there were 77 antisemitism-motivated assaults, the vast majority of which were linked to anti-Israel protests.

Some of the students who held rallies in support of Hamas and cheered for “intifada” (terror attacks or lynchings of Jews) apparently thought the right thing to do would be to target their Jewish fellow students for harassment, discrimination and even physical assault. After all, Israel is the Jewish State, so Jews anywhere and everywhere should be targets by proxy, right? Sadly, many of these students *still* do not recognize that their targeting of Jews for crime and discrimination is antisemitic and wrong.

Jewish students and teachers were blocked from campuses for much of the past year, and over 550 cases of antisemitic vandalism were recorded within 3 months of Oct. 7th.

Why have 40 states passed Holocaust Education legislation?

The purpose is not a backward-looking study of history, but rather a forward-looking effort to improve society. States want their children to learn right from wrong, to learn to be “up-standers” in the face of injustice rather than “bystanders” or, even worse, accomplices and perpetrators.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism is a critical element to Holocaust education.

It is the consensus gold standard definition of antisemitism. It has been endorsed by 5 successive White House administrations, adopted for use by all Federal agencies, and endorsed by 37 states to date.

The IHRA definition also has a mandate from the American Jewish community with the backing of over 95% of American Jewish organizations, synagogues, schools and community centers.

The definition is critical to Holocaust education for 2 main reasons:

(1) Because in order to be forward-facing, Holocaust education must educate about antisemitism as it exists today, and not just as it existed in the Nazi's Third Reich. The IHRA definition incorporates examples of contemporary, anti-Israel antisemitism, making the material both current and relevant.

(2) The presence of the IHRA definition serves as a safeguard against the potential hijacking of Holocaust education by anti-Israel extremists, who seek out opportunities to invert the memory of the Holocaust by [falsely portraying](#) Jews and Israel as Nazis or oppressors. We have seen this play out in recent years in California's 'Ethnic Studies Curriculum' scandal.

To pass this bill without grounding it in the IHRA Definition risks leaving the primary legislative intent unfulfilled and creates a real possibility of seeing the Holocaust-education effort corrupted in ways that could ironically boost contemporary anti-Semitism, rather than combat it.

I urge you to please pass this bill with the proposed amendment, and I am available for questions if you have any.

Thank you.

Sixty-ninth North Dakota Legislative Assembly
House Education Committee
H.B. 1527
February 12, 2025



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

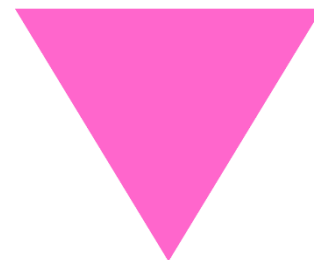
On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of North Dakota, I submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 1527 as it is currently written in regard to requiring Holocaust education in North Dakota's public schools. We strongly suggest amendment before this bill go to the full body of the House 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:
Cody J. Schuler
Advocacy Manager, ACLU of North Dakota
ND Lobbyist #367
cschuler@aclu.org

IHRA Definition of Antisemitism Bill – Key Points

1. **Function of the Legislation:** Provides officials with an objective definition of contemporary antisemitism needed to ensure proper assessment of criminal and discriminatory incidents motivated by antisemitism.

2. **Policy Objective of the Legislation:** The bill adopts an objective definition of contemporary antisemitism in order to identify antisemitic crime, to: **(1)** clarify the application of already existing laws protecting against hate crimes and unlawful discrimination; **(2)** ensure that incidents of antisemitic hate and bias are treated equally under the law; **(3)** provide officials and institutions with proper definitional tools for assessing the intent of persons who engage in unlawful activity; **(4)** ensure that public institutions remain in compliance with federal civil rights obligations; **(5)** promote better bias crime reporting and tracking.

3. **Rationale for Support of the Legislation**

Crisis levels of antisemitism: In the 3 months between Oct. 7, 2023 and Jan. 7, 2024 there was an average of nearly 34 antisemitic incidents per day across the US. These [3,291 antisemitic incidents](#) include: 56 incidents of physical assault; 554 incidents of vandalism; 1,347 incidents of verbal or written harassment; and 1,307 rallies that included antisemitic rhetoric and expressions of support for terrorism against the state of Israel and/or Jews generally. On college campuses around the country, on the basis of their national origin ties to Israel, Jewish students and teachers have been blocked by Hamas-supporting protesters from accessing campus and facilities, had their First Amendment rights suppressed, been physically assaulted, and suffered from intimidation, harassment and incitement to violence. The number of [assaults on Jews](#) on U.S. college campuses rose from 3 the 2022-2023 school year to 77 in the 2023-2024 school year.

Perpetrators of unlawful acts of antisemitic crime and discrimination often try to escape culpability by claiming that they were merely expressing ‘anti-Israel’ sentiment by attacking Jewish institutions, individuals, or points of Jewish collective identity, and that this is ‘political’, and therefore protected, speech. Criminal acts and unlawful discrimination, however, are never protected speech. Antisemitic crimes and discrimination risk going unaddressed and underreported unless a definition is adopted that identifies the ways in which Jews are victimized by contemporary antisemitism. Authorities must be given the definitional tools needed to stem criminal conduct and discriminatory behavior motivated by antisemitism. Valid monitoring and enforcement, informed analysis and investigating, and effective policy-making start with uniform definitions.

4. **Broad Bipartisan and Community Support**

The bill codifies the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) Definition of Antisemitism](#) of May 26, 2016. This definition has already been adopted or endorsed by 33 states, four successive White House administrations, and is in force in 11 federal agencies. This bill brings state guidance in line with Federal policy. The IHRA definition has a mandate from the Jewish community nationally, as expressed in its endorsement by 51 of the 53 member organizations of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, as well as by the overwhelming majority of synagogues, Jewish schools and local Jewish organizations across the country.

5. **The Bill Protects Free Speech Rights**

This bill very narrowly addresses **crime** and **illegal discrimination**, which are not protected speech (see unanimous Supreme Court decision *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*). The bill explicitly states that “Nothing contained in this bill is to be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.”

Contrary to opponents’ claims, this bill does not create a new law or protected class; it does not create a speech code; it does not infringe on First Amendment rights; it is *not* about protecting Israel from criticism, and *does not* criminalize criticism of Israel. The bill *is* about protecting local residents from antisemitic crime and unlawful discrimination. The IHRA definition *does not* say that criticism of Israel is antisemitic. It *does* provide clarity on when anti-Israel speech can cross the line into antisemitism, and provides a definition for evaluating possible antisemitic **intent** behind related **crimes or unlawful discrimination**.

North Dakota House of Representatives
House Education Committee
Feb. 12, 2025

Chairman Heinert, Vice Chair Schreiber-Beck and members of the House Education Committee,
Thank you for taking up this important issue and for allowing my testimony,

My name is Bette Grande, I am a former legislator of many years in the ND House. I speak to you today from this perspective and on my own behalf.

I support correcting the definition to ensure it is in line with the worldwide definition and the federal government's working definition. Around 40 states have this as the definition in their code as well. See below for language;

Page 1 line 9 after the first Antisemitism strike through line 11 replacing the following:

"Antisemitism" has the same meaning as provided for in the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on May 26, 2016, including the "contemporary examples of antisemitism," and incorporated by reference in Presidential Executive Order Number 13899, 84 F.R. 68779 December 11, 2019.

Re-number accordingly.

Page 2 insert a new line 8

g. as well as training on contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.

Re-number accordingly

I also support the amendment offered by Dr. Copas as it offers good clarity.

The ND legislature and our Governors have a long history of support for this issue. We have passed resolutions, proclamations, and legislation to stop the boycott, divestment, and sanction of Israel.

Some will say that it is not necessary to add this to the education curriculum, saying others have been persecuted and other excuses, but least we forget that this is a long suffering and still current issue. The education needs to be continued and clear.

After the attach of Oct. 7, 2023 our Governor proclaimed the following;

[Burgum urges support for Israel after terrorist attack](#)

"The attack by Hamas terrorists on Israel is reprehensible, and the fact it occurred on a Jewish holiday is despicable. We stand with our democratic ally Israel while lifting up in prayer the victims of these horrific attacks," Burgum said. "We also pray for the safe return of the priests and parishioners from North

Dakota congregations who are anxiously waiting to board flights home. Today we reached out to the U.S. State Department and spoke with Father Ackerman, offering to assist however possible to help ensure the safe return of those North Dakotans and all Americans wanting to return to U.S. soil.”

Note that the attach on the Israeli people affected and included North Dakotans, and US citizens. It carries over into all of society.

Much of the problem today is the lack of knowledge and misunderstanding. Now is a good time to break that and ensure the children learn truth and understand.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Blessings,

Bette Grande

District 29

HB 1527

To the honorable legislators of the North Dakota Education Committee.

My name is Randy Neal, I am the senior director of engagement for Christians United for Israel, a grassroots organization with 10,000,000 members nationwide, over 20,000 of which are in North Dakota. Part of our mission consist of efforts to advance legislation combating the scourge of antisemitism – in whatever form it rears its ugly head – as we have done in dozens of states across the Union.

Admittedly, our preferred approach to advancing such commonsense standards would be to work directly with the Department of Public Instruction, as we have done in other states, but our efforts to do so in North Dakota went unanswered.

As such, we are deeply grateful to Rep. Roger Maki and every other member of your august body who shares the view, alongside 83% of North Dakotans, that Holocaust education is important, “in part to that it doesn’t happen again.”

Renowned author, educator and Holocaust Survivor Elie Wiesel insisted that the only antidote to antisemitism is education. I think it is safe to say that most on this committee can recall learning about the Holocaust in high school or junior high school. North Dakota's study standards today are exactly what Mr. Wiesel was warning about. The Holocaust is no longer anywhere to be found. Sift through your world history standards and you will not find one mention of the Holocaust. Or of Hitler, or Auschwitz, or nazis. A 2020 Topline nationwide study on Holocaust education showed that of millennials and Gen. Z in North Dakota 41% cannot name one concentration camp. 12% believe the Jews caused the Holocaust. 29% do not know what Auschwitz was. 58% did not know 6,000,000 Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

With the tide of antisemitism sweeping across the country, elected officials see the correlation between a lack of Holocaust education standards and a rise in antisemitism and they are determined to correct this problem. To date, nearly two dozen states have laws compelling and/or standards enhancing Holocaust education. In

recent months and years Texas, Alabama, Idaho, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Arizona, to name a few, have made such changes. Moreover, federal funding has been secured for teacher certification, and approved curriculum is available digitally at no cost.

The North Dakota Department of public instruction has a daunting task and does an amazing job of graduating high school seniors with a high percentage equipped and prepared to go into the workforce or on to college. But it is a terrible disservice to your students, to the character of your state, to omit this dark chapter in history and the critical thinking and moral clarity that is born when one tries to understand how and why the Holocaust happened.

We respectfully suggest that as other states are adding mandatory study standards or curriculum that include Holocaust education, that you, the members of this committee do not just have an opportunity to correct this problem, we believe that you have a duty and responsibility to do so.

Thank you in advance for giving serious consideration to this important step for North Dakota and – we hope - adding your state to the list of those that choose to combat antisemitism by the only effective means: education.

Sincerely, Randy Neal

25.0766.03000

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to required Holocaust education; and to provide for a legislative
3 management report.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Holocaust education - Report.**

8 1. In this section:

9 a. "Antisemitism" means a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as
10 hatred toward Jews, and may be manifested physically or rhetorically toward
11 individuals, property, community institutions, and religious facilities.

a. "Antisemitism" has the same meaning as provided for in the working definition of
antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on
May 26, 2016, including the "contemporary examples of antisemitism," and incorporated
by reference in Presidential Executive Order Number 13899, 84 F.R. 68779 December 11,
2019.

12 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
13 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Third Reich and its allies and
14 collaborators during World War II.

15 c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that
16 rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.

17 2. Each school district shall provide grade-level appropriate Holocaust education.

18 3. Holocaust education must be incorporated into the United States history curriculum

- 19 required under section 15.1-21-02.2. The curriculum must include the:
- 20 a. Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;
- 21 b. History of antisemitism and the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship,
- 22 concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and
- 23 non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials;

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly

- 1 c. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the
- 2 context of the Holocaust;
- 3 d. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the
- 4 subjects described in subdivisions a and b; **as well as training on contemporary**
- 5 **manifestations of antisemitism;**
- 6 e. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United
- 7 States; and
- 8 f. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the Holocaust.
- 9 4. The superintendent of public instruction shall report on or before July first of each year
- 10 to the governor and the legislative management regarding the implementation of this
- 11 section, including the number of schools complying with this section.

25.0766.03002
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Representative Maki
February 12, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

- 1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
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- 10 ~~hatred toward Jews, and may be manifested physically or rhetorically toward~~
- 11 ~~individuals, property, community institutions, and religious facilities~~has the same
- 12 meaning as provided in the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the
- 13 international holocaust remembrance alliance on May 26, 2016, including
- 14 contemporary examples of antisemitism and incorporated by reference in
- 15 presidential executive order number 13899, published on December 11, 2019.
- 16 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
- 17 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Third Reich and its allies and
- 18 collaborators during World War II.
- 19 c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that
- 20 rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.

- 1 2. ~~Each school district shall provide grade-level appropriate Holocaust education.~~
- 2 ~~3. Holocaust education must be incorporated into the United States history curriculum~~
- 3 ~~required under section 15.1-21-02.2. The curriculum must include the~~The
- 4 superintendent of public instruction shall review the kindergarten through grade twelve
- 5 history standards. The high school world history standards must include the following
- 6 power standards:
- 7 a. Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;
- 8 b. History of antisemitism and the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship,
- 9 concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and
- 10 non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials;
- 11 c. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the
- 12 context of the Holocaust;
- 13 d. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the
- 14 subjects described in subdivisions a and b;
- 15 e. Training on contemporary manifestations of antisemitism;
- 16 f. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United
- 17 States; and
- 18 f.g. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the Holocaust.
- 19 4.3. ~~The~~Upon completion, the superintendent of public instruction shall report ~~on or before~~
- 20 ~~July first of each year to the governor and~~to the legislative management regarding the
- 21 completion of the updated kindergarten through grade twelve standards and the
- 22 implementation of ~~this section, including the number of schools complying with this~~
- 23 ~~section~~the standards.

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1527
2/17/2025

Relating to required Holocaust education; and to provide for a legislative management report.

9:27 a.m. Chairman Heinert called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

9:32 a.m. Representative Maki moved to adopt amendment #25.0766.03002, previous #37358.

Representative Morton seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	N
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	N
Representative Liz Conmy	N
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	N
Representative Dori Hauck	N
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Jim Jonas	N
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	N
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	A
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion Failed: 4-8-2

9:40 a.m. Vice Chairman Schreiber-Beck Proposed moved Amendment LC# 25.0786.03000. #37901

9:41 a.m. Representative Marschall seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	A
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	A
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried: 10-1-3

9:44 a.m. Representative Morton proposed further amending the bill by changing the definition of 'antisemitism'.

9:45 p.m. Representative Hatlestad seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	A
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	A
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried: 10-1-3

9:47 a.m. Representative Morton moved a Do Pass as amended.

9:48 a.m. Representative Hatlestad seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	N
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	A
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	N
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	A
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion Passed 8-3-3

Bill carrier: Representative Morton

9:50 a.m. Chairman Heinert closed the

hearing. *Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

Bill was reconsidered on 02/19/25.

February 17, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

HD
2/17/25
Page 1 of 2

- 1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to required Holocaust education; and to provide for a legislative
3 management report.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

- 5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Holocaust education - Report.**

8 **1. In this section:**

- 9 a. ~~"Antisemitism" means a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as~~
10 ~~hatred toward Jews, and may be manifested physically or rhetorically toward~~
11 ~~individuals, property, community institutions, and religious facilities~~ has the same
12 meaning as the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the international
13 holocaust remembrance alliance on May 26, 2016, including contemporary
14 examples of antisemitism and incorporated by reference in presidential executive
15 order number 13899, published on December 11, 2019.
16 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
17 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Third Reich and its allies and
18 collaborators during World War II.
19 ~~c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that~~
20 ~~rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.~~

- 1 2. ~~Each school district shall provide grade-level appropriate Holocaust education.~~
- 2 — 3. ~~Holocaust education must be incorporated into the United States history curriculum~~
- 3 ~~required under section 15.1-21-02.2. The curriculum must include the~~The department
- 4 of public instruction shall ensure, when the superintendent of public instruction
- 5 conducts a review of the kindergarten through grade twelve history standards, the high
- 6 school world history standards include the following as required power standards:
- 7 a. Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;
- 8 b. History of antisemitism and the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship,
- 9 concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and
- 10 non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials;
- 11 c. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the
- 12 context of the Holocaust;
- 13 d. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the
- 14 subjects described in subdivisions a and b;
- 15 e. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United
- 16 States; and
- 17 f. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the Holocaust.
- 18 4.3. ~~The superintendent of public instruction shall report on or before July first of each year~~
- 19 ~~to the governor and to the legislative management regarding the~~
- 20 implementation completion of this section, including the number of schools complying
- 21 with this section the updated kindergarten through grade twelve history standards and
- 22 the implementation of those standards.

25.0766.03000

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
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8 1. In this section:

- 9 a. "Antisemitism" means a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as
10 hatred toward Jews, and may be manifested physically or rhetorically toward
11 individuals, property, community institutions, and religious facilities.
12 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
13 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Third Reich and its allies and
14 collaborators during World War II.
15 c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that
16 rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.

17 2. The state superintendent shall conduct an updated review of the K-12 History standards. Specifically, the high school World History standards shall include the following as required power standards:

- 18 1. ~~a. Each school district shall provide grade-level appropriate Holocaust education.~~
19 3. ~~Holocaust education must be incorporated into the United States history curriculum~~
required under section 15.1-21-02.2. The curriculum must include the:

- 20 a. Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;
21 b. History of antisemitism and the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship,
22 concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and

- 23 non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials;
- 1 c. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the
- 2 context of the Holocaust;
- 3 d. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the
- 4 subjects described in subdivisions a and b;
- 5 e. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United
- 6 States; and
- 7 f. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the Holocaust.
- 8 4. The superintendent of public instruction shall report ~~on or before July first of each year~~
- 9 ~~to the governor and the legislative management regarding the implementation of this~~
- 10 ~~section, including the number of schools complying with this section.~~ to the legislative
- management regarding the completion of the updated K-12 standards and the
- implementation of such standards.

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2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1527
2/19/2025

Relating to required Holocaust education; and to provide for a legislative management report.

9:01 a.m. Chairman Heinert called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

Members Absent:

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action
- Language updates

9:02 a.m. Representative Longmuir moved to reconsider actions on House Bill 1527.

9:02 a.m. Representative Schreiber- Beck seconded the motion.

9:03 a.m. Kristen Baesler, ND State Superintendent, NDDPI, answered questions for the committee.

9:18 a.m. Representative Morton proposed removing several lines from page 2 while adding in a World History course LC# 25.0766.03004. #38032

9:18 a.m. Representative Novak seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	N
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried: 13-0-1

9:19 a.m. Representative Morton moved a Do Pass as amended

9:19 a.m. Representative Novak seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	A
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried: 12-1-1

Bill Carrier: Representative Morton

9:20 a.m. Chairman Heinert adjourned the meeting.

Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk

February 19, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

NAT
2/19/25
1 of 2

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to required Holocaust education; ~~and to provide for a legislative~~
3 ~~management report.~~

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Holocaust education—~~Report.~~**

8 1. In this section:

9 a. "Antisemitism" means a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as
10 hatred toward Jews, and may be manifested physically or rhetorically toward
11 individuals, property, community institutions, and religious facilities has the same
12 meaning as the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the international
13 holocaust remembrance alliance on May 26, 2016, including contemporary
14 examples of antisemitism and incorporated by reference in presidential executive
15 order number 13899, published on December 11, 2019.

16 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
17 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Third Reich and its allies and
18 collaborators during World War II.

19 ~~c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that~~
20 ~~rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.~~

2. ~~Each school district shall provide grade level appropriate Holocaust education.~~

~~3. Holocaust education must be incorporated into the United States history curriculum required under section 15.1-21-02.2. The curriculum must include the~~ The world history course under section 15.1-21-02 must include the following:

a. Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;

b. History of antisemitism and the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship, concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials;

c. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the context of the Holocaust;

d. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the subjects described in subdivisions a and b;

e. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United States; and

f. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the Holocaust.

~~4. The superintendent of public instruction shall report on or before July first of each year to the governor and the legislative management regarding the implementation of this section, including the number of schools complying with this section.~~

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1527**

Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0766.03004](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 1 NAY, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1527 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

25.0766.03003
Title.04000

Adopted by the Education Committee

February 17, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

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- 19 ~~c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that~~
- 20 ~~rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.~~

2. ~~Each school district shall provide grade level appropriate Holocaust education.~~

~~3. Holocaust education must be incorporated into the United States history curriculum required under section 15.1-21-02.2. The curriculum must include the~~
~~The department of public instruction shall ensure, when the superintendent of public instruction conducts a review of the kindergarten through grade twelve history standards, the high school world history standards include the following as required power standards:~~

a. Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;

b. History of antisemitism and the Holocaust, including the Third Reich dictatorship, concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials;

c. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the context of the Holocaust;

d. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the subjects described in subdivisions a and b;

e. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United States; and

f. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the Holocaust.

~~4.3. The superintendent of public instruction shall report on or before July first of each year to the governor and to the legislative management regarding the implementation completion of this section, including the number of schools complying with this section the updated kindergarten through grade twelve history standards and the implementation of those standards.~~

2025 SENATE EDUCATION

HB 1527

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1527
3/24/2025

Relating to required Holocaust education.

2:35 p.m. Vice Chairman Lemm called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

Members Absent: Chairman Beard

Discussion Topics:

- Required school curriculum and books
- Shaped our world, lives and culture
- Teach courage and faith
- Learn from history

2:35 p.m. Representative Maki, District #26, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #43622 and #43623.

2:42 p.m. Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director ND Family Alliance Legislative Action, testified in favor and submitted testimony #43583.

2:47 p.m. Ruth Jorritsma, citizen District #7, testified in favor and submitted testimony #43487.

2:54 p.m. Pastor Keith Ritchie, Minister, Cornerstone Church, testified in favor.

2:58 p.m. Andrew Alexis Varvel, Historian, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #43646.

3:06 p.m. Cody Schuler, American Civil Liberties Union of ND, testified in opposition.

3:13 p.m. Delton Erickson, Executive Director ND Human Rights Coalition, testified in opposition.

3:16 p.m. Kevin Hoherz, Special Projects and Legislative Relations ND Council of Legislative Leaders, testified in opposition.

Additional written testimony:

Bette Grande, citizen, submitted testimony in favor #43670 and 43671.

Robert Newman, citizen, submitted testimony in opposition #43543.

Senate Education Committee

HB 1527

3/24/2025

Page 2

3:20 p.m. Vice Chairman Lemm closed the hearing.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

Good morning, Chairman Beard, and honorable members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Ruth Jorritsma, and I am a citizen of North Dakota from District 7. I come before you today to request that you render a “Do Pass” on House Bill 1527, requiring Holocaust Education in our schools.

My family has a very personal connection with the Holocaust. During WW2, my mother’s family lived near Amsterdam in The Netherlands. My family had strong beliefs in God. As the Jewish people began to be taken away to camps, my great-grandfather and his family decided that they could not stand idly by. They acted on their faith by creating hiding places on their farm. They then became part of the Dutch underground, helping Jewish refugees attempting to flee the country. They would even drive to Amsterdam to pick up orphaned Jewish children to rescue. The reports vary, but we know that they were able to help over 300 refugees before they were caught.

Many of my family members were taken into custody. Some were released, but we know that at least three of my family members died in concentration camps, including my great-grandfather. A doctor who visited the camp wrote several letters to my grandmother in America. You might expect the letters to be filled with hate, but they were not. My great-grandfather held firmly to his beliefs through his entire time at the camp. He lost his life at the hands of a firing squad. Our story is one of many stories that need to be told to the generations that follow behind us.

The Holocaust was a horrific tragedy. It shows what can happen when one nationality or people group is marginalized and proclaimed to be “less than” and therefore not worthy of the dignity and respect that is due us as humans. Personally, I hold to the Bible’s statements that humans are created in the image of God. I agree with our founding fathers when they said that “*all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*”¹ When those in leadership persuade their citizens that these fundamental beliefs are not true, then abuse, torture, killing, and more become acceptable behaviors.

The Holocaust took the lives of more than 11 million victims. Six million of those victims were Jewish and 5 million were, like my family, non-Jewish victims.² The sheer magnitude of this loss must be remembered and guarded against lest history be repeated. Future generations need to understand what happened and how it happened. The loss extends beyond the current generation. Remember that not only did these people die, but their future generations were lost from this earth as well. That can never be regained.

Students need to learn about these monumental events, so they are equipped to understand how the Holocaust shaped our world, our lives, and our culture. There are many lessons to be learned from this time in history. One concept to teach is compassion. History is not just a series of names

¹ Declaration of Independence, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

² <https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/holocaust-misconceptions/>

and facts and dates. This is about real people like you and me. Compassion was one of the motivators that kept the family pressing on, even after the farm was inspected by Nazi soldiers several times. In fact, it wasn't till the soldiers came back with dogs that the hiding places were uncovered. Without compassion, why would you risk your entire family to save strangers?

My mother recalled and shared with me that she watched her mother weep over the letters received from the camp doctor. Not a tear or two but weeping over her father's current state. It is hard to relate the feelings of history to students without intentional care to do so.

The story is also an opportunity to teach faith. The letters from the doctor indicate that my great-grandfather was a spiritual leader in the camp. When he weakened and got sick, they placed him in the infirmary. Even there, he ministered to others. He was in his late 70s when he was placed in the camp, but his faith sustained him. At his trial, he challenged his captors to think about what they were doing. He encouraged them to repent. They considered releasing him, but he refused to promise not to go back to helping the Jewish people around him.

The story is also an opportunity to teach courage. The day of the final raid, the soldiers descended upon the farm and systematically went through and uncovered the hiding places. One of the farm hands, held off the advance of the Nazi soldiers with his own gun while a few of the Jews were able to flee into the woods to escape. He died where he stood from his gunshot wounds. He had the courage to stand for what was right, despite the cost. That is a rare courage to find.

History is a series of stories. I have always said that if history seems boring, it is because someone isn't telling it right. We need to know our stories, good and not so good. We need to learn from history and grow from its lessons. We need to teach an unselfish love that is willing to weigh the cost and stand for those who cannot stand for themselves. Please encourage the future generations of North Dakota's citizens to learn, to grow and to stand.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Dear Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I submit this testimony as a private, concerned citizen of North Dakota.

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 1527. I detail my reasoning below, but the short version is the bill uses a fatally flawed definition of antisemitism, one that is not about antisemitism at all, but about suppressing political speech. That is a violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and has no place in North Dakota law.

I imagine you will expect little opposition to a bill that advocates Holocaust education in K12. I myself have mixed feelings about such a bill, but not because I don't want everyone to know about and understand the Holocaust. This terrible period of history left a mark in the world that reverberates to this day, and an unhealed wound in the soul of every Jewish person. I speak as a Jewish person who was raised from an early age learning about the Holocaust. I am sure every Jewish person with a family history in Europe lost relatives to the horrors of the Holocaust. My mother's parents and my father's grandparents were immigrants to the United States from eastern Europe, who left in the late 19th or early 20th century to escape pogroms, ongoing antisemitism and limited opportunities. Not every family member left, and some went to other parts of Europe. Although my direct ancestors were in the U.S. prior to the 1930s, other family members were almost certainly victims of the Nazis and their allies.

Why, then, would I oppose this bill? A lot of states have similar laws, most likely for the same reason that one was introduced into this legislative session. My opposition is not primarily because of the mandate for Holocaust education. It is because the revised bill contains a **fatal flaw**. It would place into Century Code a definition of antisemitism that is wrong and that has already done great harm. That flaw is the adoption of the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of antisemitism. The original bill used a reasonable definition:

Section 1.1.a. "Antisemitism" means a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews, and may be physically or rhetorically towards individuals, property, community institutions, and religious facilities.

I take antisemitism very seriously. I have personally experienced antisemitism up close and personal in my life and this definition is a good approximation of the forms it took – physically and rhetorically. Most of this happened over a period of years before I graduated from high school. I still hesitate to publicly identify as a Jewish person because of those experiences, which embarrasses me to admit.

If the bill had retained this definition of antisemitism I would not be testifying in opposition. The problem is that the bill sponsors switched their definition to the IHRA definition,

apparently at the request of testimony supplied by a lobbyist for the state of Israel, a Mr. Jake Bennett who identified himself as the Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for an organization called Israeli-American Coalition for Action. This group “advocates to policymakers nationwide on behalf of pro-Israel communities” (from their website). Specifically, they “Fight the delegitimization of Israel” among other goals. This explains why they and similar organizations want the United States Congress and the states to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The language in HB1527 is circumspect about what the definition really says. The latest version simply states:

“Antisemitism” has the same meaning as the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the international holocaust remembrance alliance on May 26, 2016, including contemporary examples of antisemitism and incorporated by reference in presidential executive order number 13899, published on December 11, 2019.”

In other words, HB1527 does not actually define antisemitism! Why not? Perhaps because the IHRA definition is much longer, or perhaps to avoid drawing attention to the controversial part of it. The bill refers to a definition in an external document, which means many legislators won’t even know what they are voting for. Most critically, **the IHRA definition is a vehicle, or Trojan Horse, for putting limits on free speech, specifically *political* speech into law.** The biggest difference between the current version of the bill and the original is the expansion of the definition of antisemitism to include criticism of the state of Israel (under the section labeled “Contemporary Examples of Anti-Semitism). Here is the text of the IHRA definition, as referenced in the Executive Order:

E.O. 13899 (2019)

(i) the non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism adopted on May 26, 2016, by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which states, "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities"; and (ii) the "Contemporary Examples of Anti-Semitism" identified by the IHRA, to the extent that any examples might be useful as evidence of discriminatory intent.

I have never before seen a reference to non-Jewish individuals being subject to antisemitism, but that is not the most troubling part. Part (ii) has been used to take action against anyone critical of the actions of the state of Israel.

Why should Israel be protected under a definition of antisemitism? Israel is a U.S. ally and many of us have close relatives who are Israeli (myself included). But Israel is a state, not a

religion or ethnic group, however much Israeli law may insist that Israel must remain a Jewish nation. The implications of equating criticism of a state with antisemitism or hate speech, and putting that into law, is that critics of Israel of a purely political nature risk being accused of antisemitism, of violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and potentially incurring criminal or civil penalty, including loss of employment, expulsion from universities, and deportation if they are legal residents of the U.S. but not citizens. ALL of these have already been happening, because of political speech that has been taken as antisemitism. **We must not perpetuate the falsehood that criticizing the state of Israel or its actions is antisemitic!**

Here are a few examples of reporting on this problem:

Groups across ideological spectrum unite in opposing Antisemitism Awareness Act

The bill, which seeks to codify the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism into law, faces widespread criticism. [July 2024]

ACLU Urges Senate to Oppose Bill That Will Threaten Political Speech on College Campuses

The bill would falsely equate criticism of Israel with antisemitic discrimination [Nov. 2024]

A lot of law-abiding U.S. citizens, including many Jews, are critical of Israel and its actions, especially in the last 17 months, but even before then. Adopting the IHRA definition would amount to weaponization of antisemitism to inhibit criticism of Israel, and that is wrong and it is unconstitutional (a clear violation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution)!

This is the reason I am adamantly opposed to this bill. Take out the IHRA definition and go back to the definition used in the original bill, and I would not oppose the bill (my position would be neutral, simply because I don't think the bill is necessary or a useful way to direct education content).

Unless that happens, I urge you to vote NO on this harmful bill.

Respectfully,

Robert Newman

Citizen of North Dakota for 30 years



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1527

Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
March 24, 2025

Good afternoon Chairman Beard and honorable members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma, and I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in support of House Bill 1527 and respectfully request that you render a “DO PASS” on this bill.

Our organization believes that God has created life in each of us and that life begins at conception and ends at natural death. For that reason, all people have worth and dignity, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or other characteristics. The right to life is foundational to all other rights, so we always try to engage on bills that support this recognition and support of these values, such as this bill.

During WWII in occupied The Netherlands, my father and grandfather hid fleeing Jews in a small crawlspace under the floorboards of their bedroom closet in their city flat in The Hague. We found that space 70 years later on a trip to Holland (see picture in appendix). That small space became a lasting testament to our family’s protection of Jews during the war. In addition, my grandfather was a military police officer and used his position in the occupied government to create false passports and other documents for Jewish refugees, with the punishment of being shot immediately if found out.

As you can see, our family has a history of helping Jewish people during the Holocaust. Also, during those years, they helped hide other non-Jewish individuals from Nazi searches as well. The Holocaust was much larger than simply a story about Jewish persecution; it included the whole of Western civilization during those years. But the seed of that story is the atrocities committed against the Jewish people.

Let’s fast forward to today. According to a Pew Research poll conducted in 2023, 20% of young adults ages 18-29 believe that the holocaust was a myth.¹ We are seeing the rewriting of history by those who would have us forget past atrocities. We cannot let this happen. Please join us in

¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/one-in-five-young-americans-believes-the-holocaust-is-a-myth-poll-finds/>



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

making sure not only the Jews fleeing in WWII are recognized for what happened to them, but also every man, woman, and child who risked their lives to stop the Holocaust.

This bill does not mandate extra hours of curriculum development or classroom time for teachers who already teach about the Holocaust. It's already happening. This bill is for teachers who avoid the Holocaust subject because of personal prejudice. We certainly do not want to legislate everything that must be taught to our state's students, but neglecting one of the most defining events in the 20th Century is a travesty.

For these reasons, we ask that you render a "DO PASS" on House Bill 1527. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I'd be happy to stand for any questions.



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Appendix



Chairman and Members of the Committee

House Bill 1527 is about the Holocaust.

No matter the demographics of a school population, all students should have the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust.

Schools should have curriculum, books, and other resources to bring these stories to the voices of the Holocaust survivors in their classrooms. The further we get from the Holocaust the easier it will be to forget the stories. Especially when there aren't any survivors left to tell them. Teachers can be the ones to keep those stories alive. I have a letter from Randy Neal and he talks about wanting to add North Dakota to the list of states that teach about the Holocaust and antisemitism in school. Please consider giving house bill 1527 a yes vote. Thank you, Chairman and Members of the Committee.

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
FIRST ENGROSSMENT****ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1527**

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

- 1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to required ~~Holocaust~~holocaust education.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

- 4 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15.1-21 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
5 and enacted as follows:

6 Holocaust education.**7 1. In this section:**

- 8 a. "Antisemitism" has the same meaning as the working definition of antisemitism
9 adopted by the international holocaust remembrance alliance on May 26, 2016,
10 including contemporary examples of antisemitism and incorporated by reference
11 in presidential executive order number 13899, published on December 11, 2019.
12 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
13 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the ~~Third Reich~~third reich and its
14 allies and collaborators during World War II.
15 c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that
16 rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.

17 2. The world history course under section 15.1-21-02 must include the following:

- 18 a. ~~Causes and ramifications of the Holocaust;~~
19 ~~b. History of antisemitism, the nazi party, and the ~~Holocaust~~holocaust, including the~~
20 ~~Third Reich~~third reich dictatorship, concentration camp system, persecution of

- 1 Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II
- 2 trials;
- 3 e.b. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the
- 4 context of the Holocaust;
- 5 e.c. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the
- 6 subjects described in subdivisions a and b;
- 7 e.d. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United
- 8 States; and
- 9 f.e. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the
- 10 Holocaust; and
- 11 f. Training on the contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.

Chairman and Members of the Committee

House Bill 1527 is about the Holocaust.

No matter the demographics of a school population, all students should have the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust.

Schools should have curriculum, books, and other resources to bring these stories to the voices of the Holocaust survivors in their classrooms. The further we get from the Holocaust the easier it will be to forget the stories. Especially when there aren't any survivors left to tell them. Teachers can be the ones to keep those stories alive. I have a letter from Randy Neal and he talks about wanting to add North Dakota to the list of states that teach about the Holocaust and antisemitism in school. Please consider giving house bill 1527 a yes vote. Thank you,
Chairman and Members of the Committee.

Senate Education Committee

House Bill 1527

Andrew Alexis Varvel

March 24, 2025

Chairman Beard & Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel.

I am a historian who lives in Bismarck.

In the aftermath of World War II, author George Orwell published his classic novel *Animal Farm*. Toward the end of his novel, the original ideals of the farm animal revolution became corrupted into:

*All animals are equal,
but some animals are
more equal than others.*

This is the essential question we face about Holocaust education.

The historical focus of House Bill 1527 is Europe First. It focuses on an atrocity against Jews in Europe at the expense of everyone else.

Nazism under Adolf Hitler was animated by the idea that some people were more important than others. Moreover, Nazism was animated by the eugenic ideal that some people deserved to live and other people were “life unworthy of life.” Expendable, at best.

If we ignore the German genocide against the Herero in Namibia, Leopold II's genocidal reign of terror over Congo Free State, Cambodia's genocide under the Khmer Rouge, the genocide in Rwanda against Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994, Japan's Rape of Nanking, Japan's Rape of Manila, and the Ukrainian Holodomor, we then fall into the very same moral trap that the Nazis fell into.

If we refuse to understand the Holocaust in universal terms, we then fall into the very same moral trap that the Nazis fell into.

Nazism was anything but alone in promoting eugenics or sadistic experimentation on human beings. It was part of a general trend that North Dakota was also part of. Nazis also targeted Romani (Gypsies), black soldiers, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals. Nazism was a specific form of racism that promoted the annihilation of entire peoples, celebrated wanton cruelty, and sought to eliminate what they called “false humanity” – what we might call empathy or compassion. It wasn't the only ideology to do this.

Nazi vilification of Jews had its roots in the writings of Martin Luther and Immanuel Kant, the Russian massacre of Jews at Kishinev in 1903, and the Russian publication of the libelous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Nazism was also inspired by Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent*. Adolf Hitler praised Henry Ford in *Mein Kampf*.

We should be able to talk about institutional racism not only in the context of Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa, but also about other parts of the world. We should be able to talk about how Nazi stigmatization of empathy and compassion is a case study in evil.

Nazi Germany instituted *Gleichschaltung* (or Synchronization) to coordinate every level of German society. Nazi Germany accomplished this by subordinating every sector of German society to the direction of Nazi political commissars. Part of this coordination involved instituting a cult of personality to idolize Nazism's deified leader – Adolf Hitler. It was also about forming a regime of institutional racism that not only promoted individual bias, prejudice, and outright hatred against Jews, but also systematically embedded anti-Semitism throughout German society through weaponizing its legal system to discriminate against Jews.

Let me make this clear – I want the Holocaust to be taught because it is important history, not because state law demands it.

If our Century Code mandates teaching about the Holocaust, but not about slavery, Indian boarding schools, or withholding smallpox vaccine from Indians in what has become North Dakota, our laws then make it clear that some people are more equal than others.

Children need to learn *universal* lessons from the Holocaust. Children need to learn the *universal* relevance of this atrocity as a case study in depravity and a warning against arbitrary power.

House Bill 1527 has good intentions. It is paved with them. It is too prescriptive and too problematic to put into the Century Code.

Please give House Bill 1527 a **DO NOT PASS** recommendation.

Thank you. I am open for questions from this committee.

North Dakota House of Representatives Senate Education Committee

Feb. 12, 2025

Chairman Beard, Vice Chair Lemm and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for taking up this important issue and for allowing my testimony,

My name is Bette Grande, I am a former legislator of many years in the ND House. I write to you today from this perspective and on my own behalf.

The ND legislature and our Governors have a long history of support for this issue. We have passed resolutions, proclamations, and legislation to stop the boycott, divestment, and sanction of Israel.

Some will say that it is not necessary to add this to the education curriculum, saying others have been persecuted and other excuses, but least we forget that this is a long suffering and still current issue. The education needs to be continued and clear.

After the attach of Oct. 7, 2023 our Governor proclaimed the following;

[Burgum urges support for Israel after terrorist attack](#)

"The attack by Hamas terrorists on Israel is reprehensible, and the fact it occurred on a Jewish holiday is despicable. We stand with our democratic ally Israel while lifting up in prayer the victims of these horrific attacks," Burgum said. "We also pray for the safe return of the priests and parishioners from North Dakota congregations who are anxiously waiting to board flights home. Today we reached out to the U.S. State Department and spoke with Father Ackerman, offering to assist however possible to help ensure the safe return of those North Dakotans and all Americans wanting to return to U.S. soil."

Note that the attach on the Israeli people affected and included North Dakotans, and US citizens. It carries over into all of society.

Much of the problem today is the lack of knowledge and misunderstanding. Now is a good time to break that and ensure the children learn truth and understand.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Blessings,

Bette Grande District 29

IHRA Definition of Antisemitism Bill – Key Points

1. **Function of the Legislation:** Provides officials with an objective definition of contemporary antisemitism needed to ensure proper assessment of criminal and discriminatory incidents motivated by antisemitism.

2. **Policy Objective of the Legislation:** The bill adopts an objective definition of contemporary antisemitism in order to identify antisemitic crime, to: **(1)** clarify the application of already existing laws protecting against hate crimes and unlawful discrimination; **(2)** ensure that incidents of antisemitic hate and bias are treated equally under the law; **(3)** provide officials and institutions with proper definitional tools for assessing the intent of persons who engage in unlawful activity; **(4)** ensure that public institutions remain in compliance with federal civil rights obligations; **(5)** promote better bias crime reporting and tracking.

3. **Rationale for Support of the Legislation**

Crisis levels of antisemitism: In the 3 months between Oct. 7, 2023 and Jan. 7, 2024 there was an average of nearly 34 antisemitic incidents per day across the US. These [3,291 antisemitic incidents](#) include: 56 incidents of physical assault; 554 incidents of vandalism; 1,347 incidents of verbal or written harassment; and 1,307 rallies that included antisemitic rhetoric and expressions of support for terrorism against the state of Israel and/or Jews generally. On college campuses around the country, on the basis of their national origin ties to Israel, Jewish students and teachers have been blocked by Hamas-supporting protesters from accessing campus and facilities, had their First Amendment rights suppressed, been physically assaulted, and suffered from intimidation, harassment and incitement to violence. The number of [assaults on Jews](#) on U.S. college campuses rose from 3 the 2022-2023 school year to 77 in the 2023-2024 school year.

Perpetrators of unlawful acts of antisemitic crime and discrimination often try to escape culpability by claiming that they were merely expressing ‘anti-Israel’ sentiment by attacking Jewish institutions, individuals, or points of Jewish collective identity, and that this is ‘political’, and therefore protected, speech. Criminal acts and unlawful discrimination, however, are never protected speech. Antisemitic crimes and discrimination risk going unaddressed and underreported unless a definition is adopted that identifies the ways in which Jews are victimized by contemporary antisemitism. Authorities must be given the definitional tools needed to stem criminal conduct and discriminatory behavior motivated by antisemitism. Valid monitoring and enforcement, informed analysis and investigating, and effective policy-making start with uniform definitions.

4. **Broad Bipartisan and Community Support**

The bill codifies the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) Definition of Antisemitism](#) of May 26, 2016. This definition has already been adopted or endorsed by 33 states, four successive White House administrations, and is in force in 11 federal agencies. This bill brings state guidance in line with Federal policy. The IHRA definition has a mandate from the Jewish community nationally, as expressed in its endorsement by 51 of the 53 member organizations of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, as well as by the overwhelming majority of synagogues, Jewish schools and local Jewish organizations across the country.

5. **The Bill Protects Free Speech Rights**

This bill very narrowly addresses **crime** and **illegal discrimination**, which are not protected speech (see unanimous Supreme Court decision *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*). The bill explicitly states that “Nothing contained in this bill is to be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.”

Contrary to opponents’ claims, this bill does not create a new law or protected class; it does not create a speech code; it does not infringe on First Amendment rights; it is *not* about protecting Israel from criticism, and *does not* criminalize criticism of Israel. The bill *is* about protecting local residents from antisemitic crime and unlawful discrimination. The IHRA definition *does not* say that criticism of Israel is antisemitic. It *does* provide clarity on when anti-Israel speech can cross the line into antisemitism, and provides a definition for evaluating possible antisemitic **intent** behind related **crimes or unlawful discrimination**.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1527
4/9/2025

Relating to required Holocaust education.

9:23 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema.

Discussion Topics:

- Defining certain words
- Grammatical changes
- Currently supplemented by federal funds

9:24 a.m. Chairman Beard opened the hearing up with discussion on proposed and referenced amendment testimony #43622 introduced on 3/24/2025.

9:26 a.m. Chairman Beard recessed the hearing.

9:39 a.m. Chairman Beard reconvened the hearing and discussion on the amendment and submitted testimony #44843.

9:49 a.m. Senator Wobbema moved Do Not Pass.

9:49 a.m. Senator Axtman seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Senator Boschee will carry the bill.

9:52 a.m. Chairman Beard adjourned the meeting.

Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED HB 1527 ([25.0766.05000](#))**

Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1527 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

25.0766.05001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Representative Maki
March 12, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1527

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Hoverson, S. Olson, Osowski, Tveit, VanWinkle

Senators Clemens, Paulson, Weston

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- 5 and enacted as follows:

6 **Holocaust education.**

7 1. In this section:

- 8 a. "Antisemitism" has the same meaning as the working definition of antisemitism
- 9 adopted by the international holocaust remembrance alliance on May 26, 2016,
- 10 including contemporary examples of antisemitism and incorporated by reference
- 11 in presidential executive order number 13899, published on December 11, 2019.
- 12 b. "Holocaust" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution
- 13 and murder of approximately six million Jews by the ~~Third Reich~~third reich and its
- 14 allies and collaborators during World War II.
- 15 c. "Nazi" means the national socialist German workers' party, a political party that
- 16 rose to power in 1933 and governed Germany until 1945.
- 17 2. The world history course under section 15.1-21-02 must include the following:
- 18 a. Gauses and ramifications of the Holocaust;
- 19 b. History of antisemitism, the nazi party, and the ~~Holœeaust~~holocaust, including the
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- 1 Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II
- 2 trials;
- 3 e.b. Impact of personal responsibility, civic engagement, and societal response in the
- 4 context of the Holocaust;
- 5 e.c. Connection between national, ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance and the
- 6 subjects described in subdivisions a and b;
- 7 e.d. Leading role played by the United States and the armed forces of the United
- 8 States; and
- 9 f.e. Definition, history, response, and actions taken in the face of the
- 10 Holocaust; and
- 11 f. Training on the contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.