

Statement on Educate to Stop the Hate Act

My name is Rebecca Martin and I am a granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, Susan Warsinger. I am strongly in support of requiring Holocaust education in schools. My grandmother has devoted her life to sharing her story and emphasizing the importance of standing up to all forms of hatred. When she was about 7 years old, she crossed through a park to run an errand for her mother. The park's custodian and his child threw rocks at her and called her a "dirty Jew." In school, her teacher read aloud a children's book which compared Jews to poisonous mushrooms. These are just a couple of examples of the antisemitism she dealt with as a child in prewar Germany.

I've been shocked and disheartened to hear stories about antisemitism in Montgomery County schools, the very system where I received my education. At least three teachers have spread blood libel, a principal has spread lies about a Jewish teacher, and students have been openly hateful and hostile towards Jewish students and teachers. According to the [Anti-Defamation League](#), cases of antisemitic incidents rose by 360% from October 7, 2023 to January 7, 2024. It is clear that in today's climate, addressing antisemitism is more important than ever.

I've heard from so many Jews who are afraid to be only Jewish, whether it's wearing a Magen David necklace or wearing a kippah in public. I've read stories of people being in attacked in the streets because they are Jewish. Organizers of Jewish events now avoid posting where an event publicly to keep attendees safe. Something as simple as attending a Shabbat dinner brings the possibility of being targets of violence.

It is past time to require Holocaust education in schools. According to [The Guardian](#), nearly two-thirds of young adults in 2020 did not know that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. Disgustingly, one in 10 believe Jews caused the Holocaust. Almost a quarter of those surveyed said they believe the Holocaust was a myth or exaggerated. Jews have been the target of mass violence for thousands of years simply for existing. I have watched people across the globe ignore the fact that Jews who are alive today have survived genocide and massacres. The families and friends of victims must live with devastating loss. This pain has not been ignored, it has been celebrated.

Jews in America are being punished for the war between Israel and Hamas, a war that Israel did not start, a war where we have no influence.

I would like to conclude with a statement from my grandmother, on what future generations need to learn:

I want future generations to understand that this horror in our history started gradually. I want them to know that the Nazis implemented their policies of hatred and prejudice slowly and that it was the beginning of crimes to come. The Nazis could not have done it without the help of ordinary people who helped them commit their murders.