

Dear Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary,

As a constituent and volunteer advocate for the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in Maryland, I am urging you to support Maryland House bill HB71, Establishing the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program in the State Department of Education.

One of NCJW's resolutions is the historically accurate study of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide as part of the regular curriculum in all schools. It has been shown that discussion of the Holocaust serves as a gateway to discussions of analogous hate-filled behavior against other communities, including: LGBT+; Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous peoples; and Arab and Muslim communities; among others in Maryland and the US in general.

Maryland requires high schoolers to take history courses, which include lessons on the Holocaust. However, a 2020 report conducted by the Claims Conference that "studied young people's familiarity.....ranked Maryland in the bottom 10 states for Holocaust knowledge." In addition, the absence of appropriate instruction in the lower grades results in students whose knowledge and behavior are inadequate to mitigate the roots of the current spike in anti-Semitic incidents.

Maryland should have a public school program that addresses the need for Holocaust education with measures of success that confirm the merit of such programs. The grant-based approach to Holocaust education in HB71 would allow for such targeted approaches to succeed, and we strongly urge your support for HB71.

Sincerely,

Marina Khazanov

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Maryland, 20850