

## Senate Bill SB1058

My name is Kim Glassman, and I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 1058. As a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, daughter of a Holocaust educator, and the parent of three students in Montgomery County Public Schools, it is imperative that students across the State of Maryland receive significantly stronger Holocaust and anti-hate education than they receive currently. As it stands now, Holocaust education, which is not required statewide in Maryland, is often lacking in both quality and quantity when it is taught. Students are exposed to Holocaust education too late, and the emphasis will be on the Holocaust itself, but not the time period leading up to its start. This results in students believing that the Holocaust happened to the Jewish people in a vacuum and was not the result of thousands of years of antisemitism including ancient tropes that are frequent in today's society. The Holocaust did not begin with gas chambers and it is imperative that students receive a robust education that allows them to understand the full scope of the causes, as well as the events of the Holocaust. Limited instruction during social studies and optional books that teachers only selectively assign in English are not enough. This requires state wide legislation and coordination for all school districts to follow.

In addition, students are also sometimes under the impression that the Holocaust is the only calamity to ever befall the Jewish people, and also do not believe that antisemitism is a problem today. In fact, according to a recent Harvard-Harris poll, two thirds of Americans ages 18-24 believe that Jews are oppressors.<sup>1</sup> In reality, we know that Jews are frequent victims of hate crimes, especially since October 7, 2023. Much more needs to be done to fight antisemitism in all areas of society. Given this fact, Holocaust education must also lead into a discussion in terms of how the same tropes that lead up to the Holocaust are popular when discussing Jews or Israel today. For example, the claim that Israel is committing "genocide" or "ethnic cleansing" is tied to the ancient blood libel of poisoning Christian children in Europe. Given the explosion of antisemitism and dearth of Holocaust knowledge in Maryland, especially in schools and amongst young people, this legislation cannot wait. Please pass SB1058.

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<sup>1</sup> Gans, J. (2023, December 18). *Wide generational gap persists on views around Israel-hamas war: Poll*. The Hill.

<https://thehill.com/policy/national-security/4366498-wide-generation-gap-persists-on-views-around-israel-hamas-war-poll/>