

FAVORABLE
House Bill 71
Education – Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program – Established

House Ways and Means Committee
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Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 71, which would establish the Holocaust Education Assistance Grant Program in the Maryland State Department of Education to assist local school systems with Holocaust education in public schools, authorize a local school system to apply to the Department for a grant from the Program to be used only for certain Holocaust-related training, materials, and activities, and require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$500,000 to the Program.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As our state and country has faced a profoundly disturbing rise in antisemitic hate in the form of vandalism and attacks over the past several years, it is of the utmost importance that students receive a complete and accurate history education that comprehensively addresses the Holocaust and the grave dangers of prejudice.^{1 2} This bill provides important funding to that end. LEAs can use this grant to deepen students' understanding of Holocaust history by providing up-to-date instructional materials and opportunities to learn through field trips and assemblies.

We also recognize the benefits of making available professional development on Holocaust-related content knowledge, and we urge that any trainings should be subject to collective bargaining to ensure that educators can gain credit hours and receive the full benefit of this guidance.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 71.

¹ 'Way Out of Control': I-Team Examines Rise in Antisemitic Incidents in Montgomery County (2023).
<https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/way-out-of-control-i-team-examines-rise-in-antisemitic-incidents-in-montgomery-county/3266981/>

² Antisemitism is on the rise in the U.S., surveys say (2023).
<https://www.axios.com/2023/02/13/antisemitism-ajc-poll-survey-rise-online>