

**First Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

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HJR23-1021

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Michaelson Jenet and Weinberg,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Gardner and Ginal,

House Committees

Senate Committees

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23-1021

101 **CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST.**

1 WHEREAS, Genocide begins not with violence but with words;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Prejudice, bigotry, bias, and racism have been the
4 causes of conflict, war, and mass atrocities throughout human history; and

5 WHEREAS, Observing an individual moment of silence for each
6 Jewish victim of the Holocaust would take over 11 years; and

7 WHEREAS, The English word "holocaust" derives from Greek
8 words meaning "whole" (holos) and "burnt" (kaustos), and generally
9 describes destruction on a mass scale. "Holocaust" as a proper noun
10 specifically refers to the state-sponsored persecution and mass murder of
11 European Jews and others at the direction of the German Nazi

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

1 government between 1933 and 1945; and

2 WHEREAS, The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in
3 January 1933, asserted that Germans were racially superior and that Jews
4 and others were inferior and an alien threat to the so-called German racial
5 community; and

6 WHEREAS, The Nazis used antisemitism as a political weapon to
7 gain popular support, blaming Jews for all of Germany's problems,
8 including the country's defeat in World War I, the economic depression,
9 and the Bolshevik threat of communism; it made little difference that the
10 Nazi's accusations were blatantly contradictory and their so-called facts
11 were fabricated; and

12 WHEREAS, Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany and its
13 collaborators murdered 6 million Jews (two out of every three Jews who
14 lived throughout Europe), 1.5 million of whom were children, as well as
15 5 million other civilians, including Sinti people, Roma people, people
16 with intellectual or developmental disabilities, gay men, Jehovah's
17 Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents; and

18 WHEREAS, We recall that in the aftermath of the war, Israel, a
19 close ally and friend of the United States, became a refuge for many
20 survivors who endured the ravages of the Holocaust and has remained a
21 sanctuary for Jews worldwide seeking safety ever since; and

22 WHEREAS, We gratefully acknowledge the more than 28,000
23 non-Jews who, at great risk to themselves, saved Jews from extermination
24 during the Holocaust and have been designated Righteous Among the
25 Nations by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center; and

26 WHEREAS, Today, as we mourn the loss of those who were killed
27 and consider the terrible experiences of those who suffered and lived
28 through the Holocaust, we note that antisemitic acts are not a thing of the
29 past: According to the Anti-Defamation League's annual audit of
30 antisemitic incidents, anti-Jewish incidents surged to historic levels in
31 2022, with a total of 3,697 incidents reported across the United States, an
32 increase of 36 percent compared to 2021. In Colorado, there were 71
33 reported incidents of anti-Jewish harassment, vandalism, and assault in
34 2022, which is the second highest level recorded in more than 10 years.
35 Colorado ranked twelfth in the country in 2022 and eighth in 2021 for the
36 most reported antisemitic incidents. Globally, there has also been an

1 increase in antisemitic incidents; some Jews feel more isolated and
2 vulnerable as a result; and

3 WHEREAS, We must also acknowledge that ethnic cleansing,
4 genocide, terrorism, crimes against humanity, and wars on civilian
5 populations are not relics of the past; and

6 WHEREAS, Regretfully, the phrase "Never Again" has become
7 "Yet Again", as we see today and in the recent past so much brutality in
8 places like Myanmar, Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, Bosnia, Cambodia, Ukraine,
9 Rwanda, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan; and

10 WHEREAS, Today, while we remember the Holocaust, we focus
11 our attention on the passing of Holocaust survivors who provided
12 firsthand accounts of the terrors they endured, leaving their children and
13 grandchildren as the last generations to know the stories of the Holocaust
14 directly from those who lived through it; and

15 WHEREAS, While we are fortunate that several organizations in
16 Colorado are dedicated to retelling the stories of the Holocaust and other
17 genocides, it is not enough; far too many people, including most students,
18 need more opportunities to learn about these atrocities so they are not
19 repeated. To mitigate the issue, on July 8, 2020, Governor Polis signed
20 into law House Bill 20-1336, requiring the satisfactory completion of a
21 course that includes Holocaust and genocide studies as a condition of
22 high school graduation in public schools; and

23 WHEREAS, We recognize the tremendous investment and
24 preparation that Colorado school districts, administrators, and, foremost,
25 classroom educators are putting forth to implement and support House
26 Bill 20-1336 as they ensure the phrase "We remember" will carry
27 meaning and merit for generations of Colorado students; and

28 WHEREAS, It is our responsibility to bear witness to the truth of
29 the horrors of the Holocaust, its many lessons, and to prevent hateful
30 words from building up like the bricks that built Auschwitz; now,
31 therefore,

32 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
33 *Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*
34 *concurring herein:*

1 That we, the members of the General Assembly:

2 (1) Commemorate the Holocaust;

3 (2) Promote anti-bias, bullying prevention, and Holocaust and
4 genocide education programs in school districts and universities to
5 prevent antisemitic incidents that target Jewish students, including as a
6 result of their actual or perceived support of the state of Israel; and

7 (3) Declare that the people of Colorado should understand the
8 power of words, remember the great injustices of the past, and commit to
9 preventing such atrocities in the future.

10 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
11 to the Jewish Community Relations Council of JEWISHcolorado; the
12 Mountain States regional office of the Anti-Defamation League; the
13 Coalition Against Global Genocide; the Holocaust Awareness Institute at
14 the University of Denver's Center for Judaic Studies; the Interfaith
15 Alliance of Colorado; the Mizel Museum; the Denver Parks and
16 Recreation Department's Babi Yar Park; the Mountain States office of the
17 Jewish National Fund; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in
18 Washington, D.C.; the Colorado Holocaust Educators; and the University
19 of Colorado Boulder Program in Jewish Studies.