



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23-1021

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Michaelson Jenet and Weinberg, Amabile, Armagost, Bacon, Bird, Bockenfeld, Boesenecker, Bottoms, Bradfield, Bradley, Brown, Daugherty, DeGraaf, deGruy Kennedy, Dickson, Duran, English, Evans, Frizell, Froelich, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Hamrick, Hartsook, Herod, Holtorf, Joseph, Kipp, Lieder, Lindsay, Lindstedt, Lukens, Lynch, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, McCormick, McLachlan, Ortiz, Parenti, Pugliese, Sharbini, Sirota, Snyder, Soper, Story, Taggart, Titone, Valdez, Velasco, Vigil, Weissman, Willford, Wilson, Winter T., Woodrow, Young, McCluskie; also SENATOR(S) Gardner and Ginal, Baisley, Buckner, Coleman, Cutter, Danielson, Exum, Gonzales, Hansen, Hinrichsen, Jaquez Lewis, Kirkmeyer, Kolker, Liston, Lundeen, Marchman, Moreno, Mullica, Pelton B., Pelton R., Priola, Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Simpson, Smallwood, Sullivan, Van Winkle, Will, Winter F., Zenzinger, Fenberg.

CONCERNING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The English word "holocaust" derives from Greek words meaning "whole" (holos) and "burnt" (kaustos), and generally describes destruction on a mass scale. "Holocaust" as a proper noun specifically refers to the state-sponsored persecution and mass murder of European Jews and others at the direction of the German Nazi government between 1933 and 1945; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That we, the members of the General Assembly:

(1) Commemorate the Holocaust;

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

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

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

Julie McCluskie
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
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