

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

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R24-0980.01 Asia Merrill x4829

SJR24-016

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Michaelson Jenet,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Woodrow and Weinberg,

Senate Committees

House Committees

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 24-016

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 hardships,
8 including the country's defeat in World War I, the economic depression,
9 and the threat of Bolshevik communism; it made little difference that the
10 Nazis' 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 (2 out of every 3 Jews who lived
14 throughout Europe), 1.5 million of whom were children, as well as 5
15 million other civilians, including Sinti people, Roma people, people with
16 intellectual or developmental disabilities, gay men, Jehovah's Witnesses,
17 Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents; and

18 WHEREAS, We recall that in the aftermath of World War II,
19 Israel, a close ally and friend of the United States, became a refuge for
20 many survivors who endured the ravages of the Holocaust and has
21 remained a 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 Preliminary ADL data indicates that the number of reported antisemitic
36 incidents in 2023 will be three times what it was in 2022. Colorado

1 ranked twelfth in the country in 2022 and eighth in 2021 for the most
2 reported antisemitic incidents. Globally, there has also been an increase
3 in antisemitic incidents; some Jews feel more isolated and vulnerable as
4 a result; and

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

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

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

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

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

30 That we, the members of the General Assembly:

31 (1) Commemorate the Holocaust;

32 (2) Promote anti-bias, bullying prevention, and Holocaust and
33 genocide education programs in school districts and universities to
34 prevent antisemitic incidents that target Jewish students, including

1 targeting based on their actual or perceived support of the state of Israel;
2 and

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

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