

First Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 25-0458.01 Owen Hatch x2698

SENATE BILL 25-123

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Gonzales J.,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Camacho,

Senate Committees
Education

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING THE ADDITION OF GENOCIDE AGAINST NATIVE
102 AMERICANS TO THE HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES IN
103 PUBLIC SCHOOL STATUTE.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill expands the Holocaust and genocide studies curriculum taught in public schools to include the genocide against Native Americans, the Sand Creek massacre and other massacres, and the Colorado Native American residential and boarding schools.

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 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly
3 finds and declares that:

4 (a) The Sand Creek Massacre of peaceful Arapaho and Cheyenne
5 Peoples by the United States Army led by John Milton Chivington on
6 November 29, 1864, remains the bloodiest day in Colorado history. It
7 drove entire tribes from the state, leaving their descendants to deal with
8 the intergenerational effects of genocide.

9 (b) While it was investigated by the authorities at the time and
10 found to have been a massacre that targeted innocent Indigenous women,
11 children, and men, it was not until the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of
12 the massacre that then Governor John Hickenlooper provided Colorado's
13 first official apology for the Sand Creek Massacre;

14 (c) The Ute Tribes were also subject to massacres, such as the
15 Meeker and Beaver Creek Massacres, as they were exercising their rights
16 and protecting their way of life. It is important to recognize other
17 massacres of Native Americans in the Holocaust and genocide studies in
18 Colorado public schools statute.

19 (d) Section 22-1-104.7, Colorado Revised Statutes, requiring the
20 teaching of the Holocaust and genocide studies in Colorado public
21 schools, was passed in 2022 after the official apology for the Sand Creek
22 Massacre, but it was not specifically listed in the statute. This amendment
23 rectifies this omission.

24 (e) On October 25, 2024, then President Biden officially
25 apologized to Native Americans for Indian boarding schools. Colorado
26 Governor Polis and Lieutenant Governor Primavera concurred and

1 referred to the work under House Bill 22-1327, which created the federal
2 Indian boarding school research program and House Bill 24-1444, which
3 recreated the federal Indian boarding school research program,
4 confirming that this constituted genocide and should be taught in public
5 schools alongside other massacres and crimes committed against Native
6 Americans in this land.

7 (f) The forcible removal of children from one group to another, in
8 this case Indigenous children to boarding schools, meets the international
9 definition of genocide under the United Nations Convention on the
10 Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which is also
11 replicated in the underlying section 22-1-104.7, Colorado Revised
12 Statutes, concerning the Holocaust and genocide studies; and

13 (g) This act gives meaning and recognition to the ongoing
14 suffering of Native Americans and their communities from the
15 intergenerational effects of genocide against them.

16 (2) (a) The general assembly therefore declares that it is in the
17 public interest of Colorado to add genocide against Native Americans to
18 the statute requiring the Holocaust and genocide studies by explicitly
19 listing genocide against Native Americans; the Sand Creek Massacre and
20 other massacres of Native Americans; and Native American boarding and
21 residential schools.

22 (b) The act also directs the setting of standards that identify the
23 knowledge and skills that students must acquire and the inclusion of
24 materials in the resource bank.

25 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-1-104.7, **amend**
26 (1)(c) and (2)(b) as follows:

27 **22-1-104.7. Teaching of Holocaust and genocide studies -**

1 **applicability - definitions.** (1) As used in this section, unless the context
2 otherwise requires:

3 (c) "Holocaust and genocide studies" means studies on the
4 Holocaust, genocide, and other acts of mass violence, including, but not
5 limited to:

6 (I) The Armenian Genocide;

7 (II) THE GENOCIDE AGAINST NATIVE AMERICANS;

8 (III) THE SAND CREEK MASSACRE AND OTHER MASSACRES; AND

9 (IV) THE NATIVE AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL AND BOARDING
10 SCHOOLS.

11 (2) (b) (I) ~~The provisions of~~ Subsection (2)(a) of this section
12 applies only if the standards are adopted by the state board on or before
13 July 1, 2023.

14 (II) SUBSECTIONS (1)(c)(II) TO (1)(c)(IV) OF THIS SECTION APPLY
15 ONLY IF THE STANDARDS ARE ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD ON OR
16 BEFORE JULY 1, 2026.

17 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-2-127.3, **amend**
18 (2)(a)(V) and (2)(c); and **add** (2)(d) as follows:

19 **22-2-127.3. Holocaust and genocide studies - resource bank -**
20 **technical assistance - definitions.** (2) (a) The department shall create
21 and maintain a publicly available resource bank of materials pertaining
22 to Holocaust and genocide courses and programs. At a minimum, the
23 resource bank must include:

24 (V) Case studies on the Holocaust and genocides, including, but
25 not limited to:

26 (A) The Armenian Genocide;

27 (B) THE GENOCIDE AGAINST NATIVE AMERICANS;

1 (C) THE SAND CREEK MASSACRE AND OTHER MASSACRES; AND

2 (D) THE NATIVE AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL AND BOARDING
3 SCHOOLS.

4 (c) (I) The department shall ensure that the resource bank is
5 available for access by school districts, charter schools, boards of
6 cooperative services, and the public by July 1, 2021.

7 (II) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (2)(c)(I) OF THIS SECTION,
8 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ENSURE THAT THE RESOURCE BANK AVAILABLE
9 FOR ACCESS BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS, CHARTER SCHOOLS, BOARDS OF
10 COOPERATIVE SERVICES, AND THE PUBLIC INCLUDES THE RESOURCES
11 DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTIONS (2)(a)(V)(B) TO (2)(a)(V)(D) OF THIS SECTION
12 BY JULY 1, 2027.

13 (d) THE MATERIALS AND CASE STUDIES DEVELOPED REGARDING
14 SUBSECTIONS (2)(a)(V)(B) TO (2)(a)(V)(D) OF THIS SECTION MUST BE
15 CREATED IN CONSULTATION WITH NATIVE AMERICANS AFFECTED BY
16 GENOCIDE, INCLUDING THE SOUTHERN UTE AND UTE MOUNTAIN UTE
17 TRIBES.

18 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-7-1005, **amend**
19 (2.7)(a) as follows:

20 **22-7-1005. Preschool through elementary and secondary**
21 **education - aligned standards - adoption - revisions.** (2.7) (a) (I) On
22 or before July 1, 2021, the state board shall adopt standards that identify
23 the knowledge and skills that students ~~should~~ **MUST** acquire as a condition
24 of high school graduation related to Holocaust and genocide studies IN
25 SUBSECTION (2.7)(a)(I)(A) OF THIS SECTION, as defined in section
26 22-1-104.7 (1), including, but not limited to:

27 (A) The Armenian Genocide;

- 1 (B) THE GENOCIDE AGAINST NATIVE AMERICANS;
2 (C) THE SAND CREEK MASSACRE AND OTHER MASSACRES; AND
3 (D) THE NATIVE AMERICAN RESIDENTIAL AND BOARDING
4 SCHOOLS.

5 (II) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (2.7)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION,
6 ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2026, THE STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT
7 STANDARDS THAT IDENTIFY THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THAT STUDENTS
8 MUST ACQUIRE AS A CONDITION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RELATED
9 TO SUBSECTIONS (2.7)(a)(I)(B) TO (2.7)(a)(I)(D) OF THIS SECTION.

10 **SECTION 5. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
11 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
12 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
13 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
14 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this
15 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
16 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
17 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
18 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.