



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

## Senator Sean Ryan, Assemblymember Nily Rozic Visit The Holocaust Resource Center To Urge Passage Of Legislation To Ensure New York State Schools Are Teaching Students About The Holocaust

SEAN M. RYAN June 3, 2021

| ISSUE: [NYS SENATE DISTRICT 60](#), [NYS SENATOR SEAN RYAN](#), [HOLOCAUST EDUCATION](#), [HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN NYS](#)



**SENATOR SEAN RYAN,  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER NILY ROZIC VISIT  
THE HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER TO**

# URGE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO ENSURE NEW YORK STATE SCHOOLS ARE TEACHING STUDENTS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

*Members Of New York State Legislature Highlight Concerning Survey About Holocaust Knowledge Among Millennials And Gen Z And Urge Review Of New York's Education Policies*

*New York Ranks Among The Lowest For Basic Knowledge About The Holocaust*

**AMHERST, N.Y.** – Today, June 3, 2021, New York State Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblymember Nily Rozic visited the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo to highlight the importance of legislation to improve Holocaust education in New York schools.

The legislators urged passage of legislation ([S.121A/A.472A](#)) that would ensure that students in New York are being taught about the Holocaust as required by existing State law. The legislation would create a study to assess the state of Holocaust education in New York and authorize the Commissioner of Education to enact regulations to ensure schools are meeting the state's standards. The legislation is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Rozic and in the Senate by Senator Anna Kaplan.

The legislators also announced a \$1.5-million commitment to benefit Holocaust survivors in New York State. As part of the state budget, the legislature committed a 400% increase in funding to provide survivors with financial assistance, mental health care, legal services, transportation, and sensitive end-of-life care.

[A recent study by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany](#) documented a concerning lack of knowledge about the Holocaust among New Yorkers ages 18-39. The study found that 58% of New Yorkers in that age group were unable to name a concentration camp and 28% believed the Holocaust is a myth or has been exaggerated. In addition, 60% did not know that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. Even more concerning, New York led all states with 19% of respondents who believed Jews caused the Holocaust.

The legislation would take the following steps to improve Holocaust education in New York State:

- Authorize the Commissioner of Education to conduct a study to determine which school districts are offering instruction on the Holocaust in compliance with Section 801 of the Education Law.
- Require a report on the findings of the study by the first of January after the bill becomes law.

- Direct the Commissioner to put forward recommendations ensuring school districts are offering instruction on the Holocaust in compliance with Section 801 of the Education Law.

**Senator Sean Ryan** said, “When our children are taught about the atrocities suffered by Jews during the Holocaust, they learn lessons that remain relevant to this day. It is easy to take for granted that our schools are accurately teaching the terrible history of the Holocaust, but the Claims Conference has uncovered truly worrying statistics about young people in our state. As time passes, fewer and fewer people have a personal connection to the atrocities committed during the Holocaust; through our schools, we need to ensure that each new generation of New Yorkers understands the scope and significance of what happened to the Jewish people during that dark time. We already have Holocaust education standards in place for our schools – now we need to make sure that those standards are being followed.”

**Assemblymember Nily Rozic** said, “As we've experience historic levels of antisemitism in New York and around the country over the past few weeks, Never Again needs to be a call to action and not merely a platitude offered on Holocaust Remembrance Day. When study after study delineate embarrassing ignorance and misinformation about the Holocaust among New Yorkers, we need to rectify the issue at the source -- educational requirements. Ensuring that the Holocaust is properly taught in schools coupled with education on recognizing antisemitism and other hate crimes is a crucial first step in stopping dangerous conspiracy theories. My bill to ensure compliance with New York's Holocaust education requirement is the logical first step to turn the tides against ignorance and antisemitism.”

**Assemblymember Karen McMahon** said, “With the passage of time and the loss of witnesses to the Holocaust, the need to share the full story of the atrocity is more profound than ever. Incidents of anti-Semitic violence, threats, and vandalism have increased, while denial of the Holocaust has become more commonplace. Teaching of the Holocaust in New York schools must be honest, thorough and accurate, so that future generations can fully appreciate the consequences of hate and religious discrimination. We must ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust do not become a mere abstraction of history, but a guarantee that such a horror will never happen again.”

**Elizabeth Schram, Director of the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo** said, “With the lack of Holocaust knowledge among New Yorkers and the recent rise in antisemitic incidents, it is clear that Holocaust education is more vital now than ever before. The Holocaust Resource Center is dedicated to teaching the lessons of the Holocaust, remembering the Survivors and Victims, and promoting social justice, civic responsibility and human rights. While our programs and Speakers Bureau reach thousands of students and teachers each year, this legislation would allow us to better identify and increase our efforts in districts that need additional support. We are proud to promote legislation that will enhance Holocaust education in schools and better prepare students to recognize and stand up to all forms of antisemitism, hatred and bigotry.”

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## 2021-S121A

Holocaust, Holocaust education, Holocaust Education in NYS, Education Committee

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Authorizes the commissioner of education to conduct a survey regarding instruction on the Holocaust within the state

December 18, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by [Anna M. Kaplan](#)

Do you support this bill?

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