

2010 -- S 2180

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2010

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Metts, Perry, Pichardo, Miller, and C Levesque

Date Introduced: February 09, 2010

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 91

4 GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

5 **16-91-1. Legislative findings. --** The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

6 (1) On November 4, 1988 the United States government ratified the International
7 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("Genocide
8 Convention") which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Upon
9 ratification, the United States government recognized that all periods of history, genocide has
10 inflicted great losses on humanity; and was convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from
11 such an odious scourge, international co-operation was required.

12 (2) The United States government recognizes that genocide still continues, today, in the
13 twenty-first (21st) century. The United States Congress passed House Con. Resolution 467,
14 "Declaring genocide in Darfur, Sudan" on July 22, 2004. On September 9, 2004, the United
15 States Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the United States Senate Foreign Relations
16 Committee that "genocide has occurred and may still be occurring in Darfur. Additionally,
17 President George W. Bush affirmed the Secretary of State's finding on September 21, 2004, when
18 he addressed the United Nations General Assembly by saying: "At this hour, the world is
19 witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my

1 government has concluded are genocide."

2 (3) The United States Department of Education says "education is primarily a State and
3 local responsibility in the United States. It is States and communities, as well as public and
4 private organizations of all kinds that establish schools and college and develop curricula..."

5 (4) The State of Rhode Island also has previously demonstrated its concerns and interests
6 regarding raising awareness on subject of genocide.

7 (i) In 2000, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill No. 7397 "Genocide and
8 Human Rights Education," requiring the Rhode Island department of education to "develop
9 curricular material on genocide and human rights issues and guidelines for the teaching of that
10 material."

11 (ii) In 2007, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill No. 5142, requiring the
12 state investment commission to divest its assets from targeted companies in Sudan.

13 (5) The establishment of free public education in the United States is intended to prepare
14 citizens for participation in American social, economic, and political activities.

15 (6) The State of Rhode Island has also previously demonstrated its concerns for civic
16 education, of which genocide education should be a component. In 2005, the general assembly
17 directed the board of regents for elementary and secondary education to develop and adopt a set
18 of grade level standards in civic education by August 31, 2007.

19 (7) Given the importance of the issue of genocide to the political affairs of the United
20 States, as well as the responsibility of the state to educate its citizens, it is a fundamental
21 responsibility of the State of Rhode Island to ensure that the critical subject of genocide is
22 included as part of the curriculum in all public schools.

23 (8) It is the judgment of the Rhode Island general assembly to mandate that every board
24 of education in the state shall include instruction on the subject of genocide in an appropriate
25 place in the curriculum, for all middle and high school students.

26 (i) Furthermore, it is the prerogative and desire of the Rhode Island general assembly to
27 supplement this mandate by appropriating sufficient funding for a program to be created that
28 trains educators and provides resources on how to teach this complex, but essential, subject. This
29 program will be supervised by the Rhode Island department of education.

30 **16-91-2. Definitions. --** For the purpose of this chapter, the following words shall have
31 the following meanings:

32 (1) "Genocide," as defined by the Genocide Convention: "means" any of the following
33 acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious
34 group, such as: (i) Killing members of the group; (ii) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to

1 members of the group; (iii) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to
2 bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (iv) Imposing measures intended to
3 prevent births within the group and; (v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another
4 group.

5 **16-91-3. Powers and duties. -- The state shall adhere to the following procedures:**

6 (1) The department of education shall make available curriculum materials and such other
7 materials as may assist local and regional school committees in developing instructional programs
8 pursuant to this section. The department of education, within available appropriations and
9 utilizing available resource materials, shall assist and encourage local and regional school
10 committees to include information on relevant genocides, including the Holocaust, Armenia,
11 Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, and Darfur. This should be included in an appropriate place in the
12 curriculum of all middle and high school students.

13 (2) This instruction shall enable students to:

14 (i) Identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior
15 relating to the subject of genocide;

16 (ii) Understand the scope of genocide and its consequences that are inflicted upon the
17 victims by studying past cases; and

18 (iii) Recognize that genocide is a consequence of prejudice, discrimination and racism,
19 which can be found here in Rhode Island.

20 **16-91-4. Implementation and Accountability of Act. -- (a) The Rhode Island**
21 department of education is charged with the responsibility of implementing a genocide education
22 program, whether it be an internal program or working with an external third-party institution.
23 The department shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

24 (1) To oversee specialized annual training programs in order to enable educators to fulfill
25 this act and teach the complex subject of genocide. It is recommended that these training
26 programs be run in the state universities that are already equipped with both physical and human
27 resources that can assist in the training. These programs should be run annually before the start of
28 each school year.

29 (2) To provide assistance and advice to public and private schools with respect to the
30 implementation of genocide education and awareness programs;

31 (3) To meet with county and local school officials and other interested public and private
32 organizations, including service organizations, for the purpose of assisting with the planning,
33 coordination or modification of courses of study dealing with the subject of genocide; and

34 (4) To prepare reports for the governor and the general assembly regarding the

1 implementation of genocide curriculum by school districts as well as recommendations to
2 facilitate the inclusion of genocide studies in educational systems in the state.

3 (5) To designate a week on the school calendar during which genocide education and
4 awareness is highlighted and publicized as a focus of the curriculum of schools throughout the
5 state.

6 (b) The subject of genocide shall be included in the civics grade span expectations and
7 various examples of genocide should be included in each school district's middle and high school
8 civic/social studies curriculum in order to reach all of the instructional expectations of this
9 chapter.

10 **16-91-5. Appropriations.** -- The general assembly shall appropriate an additional fifty
11 thousand dollars (\$50,000) to the budget of the Rhode Island department of education for the
12 hiring of an appropriate staff member that can manage the implementation of this chapter.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION

1 This act would give responsibility to the department of education to implement a
2 genocide education program.

3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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