

Dear Members of Oregon House Committee on Education,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 664A, which will require school districts to provide instruction about Holocaust, genocide, and other acts of mass violence, beginning with 2020-2021 school year.

As the father of two school children, and the son of a survivor who fled from the Nazis, I agree that it is incredibly important for all school children in Oregon to learn about these events, to confront the immorality of them, and to reflect on the causes.

When the Oregon State Board of Education develops academic content standards for Holocaust and genocide studies as required by SB664A, it should include the study of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian famine-genocide of 1932-1933, in which millions of Ukrainians were forced to surrender their food – and starve to death; many who were suspected of saving scraps food for their families to eat were summarily executed.

In 2017, the Oregon legislature unanimously approved SCR003, which designated November 25, 2017 as Holodomor Remembrance Day in Oregon. I refer you to the legislative record in OLIS for SCR003 for more information about this genocide (<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Measures/Overview/SCR003>). As described in the Staff Measure Summary for SCR003:

“The Ukrainian famine of 1932–1933, known as Holodomor, caused the deaths of approximately five million innocent men, women and children in Ukraine, and resulting in the elimination of an estimated 25 percent of the rural population of Ukraine. Additionally, the famine resulted in the deaths of between one and two million people in regions outside Ukraine, including the Ukrainian North Caucasus territory. During the artificial famine ordered by Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, millions of people were starved to death by forced agricultural collectivization and grain seizure by the Soviet government.

The Soviet Union and Western scholars largely did not confirm the occurrence of Holodomor until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, when archival documentation of the famine and its enforcement became available. Established in 1985, the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine (Commission) was tasked with studying the famine in order to gain greater knowledge and understanding of the famine and the Soviet Union's role. On April 22, 1988, the Commission delivered the study's findings to Congress, including the statement that the victims "starved to death in a man-made famine." While the Ukraine Famine resulted in one of the largest losses of human life in the 20th century, awareness and education about the occurrence is not widespread.”

I also encourage the State Board of Education to consult with members of the Ukrainian-American community for information about the Holodomor when developing educational standards.

Sincerely,

Paul Terdal

NW Portland

Resident of HD36 / SD18