



***U.S. Committee for
Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness 1932-33***

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April 29, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Education
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 664A - Requires State Board of Education to develop academic content standards for Holocaust and genocide studies.

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony to this body on matters regarding SB 664A related to the inclusion of a curriculum in the Oregon public school course work dedicated to genocides largely unknown or not studied, in particular the man-made genocide in Ukraine 1932-1933, referred to as the *Holodomor*, or death by starvation.

My name is Michael Sawkiw, Jr., and as Chairman of the ***U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness 1932-1933***, the subject of Stalin's engineered genocide in Ukraine is of great importance as it is one of the most tragic pages of man's inhumanity to man, and unfortunately, one of the least known genocides in modern history. It is because of this that the ***U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness 1932-1933*** considers it extremely important that a curriculum dedicated to studying the causes and results of the Ukrainian Genocide be taught within the Oregon public school system. It is crucial that such chapters of world history be known, remembered, and taught, as it gives us the power to foresee and recognize future tragedies and perhaps even intervene before it becomes too late.

To understand the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide, one needs to recognize two images personified in two dates. The first date – November 7, 1917 – the day of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow that created a tyrannical regime which unleashed unspeakable horror amongst those its enslaved, most notably Stalin's engineered famine-genocide in Ukraine in 1932-1933. Regrettably, the world of the 1930's did not make any substantial efforts to assist or relieve the Ukrainian nation or dispute the genocidal policies of the Soviets. The general attitude of many democratic Western states was similar to that

expressed in a document compiled at that time by the British Foreign Service: “The truth of the matter is, of course, that we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions ... We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced.”

The second date and image is - November 7, 2015 - the awe inspiring unveiling and dedication of a Memorial to the victims of the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide (Holodomor) in Washington, DC. Built on U.S. federal land and officially part of the National Park Service system, the Memorial illustrates a wall of wheat whose bas relief goes from a positive image to a negative, thus reflective of the bountiful grain that was physically confiscated from the Ukrainian people, who were thus subsequently left for dead.



*November 7, 2015: Ukrainian Holodomor Memorial Dedication Ceremony, Washington, DC
(from l to r: Michael Sawkiw, Jr., Chairman – U.S. Holodomor Committee; Rep. Sander Levin, co-sponsor of the congressional bill mandating the Memorial; Mrs. Maryna Poroshenko, First Lady of Ukraine; H.E. Valery Chaly, Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary ambassador of Ukraine to the United States)*

Each day thousands of commuters and tourists pass by the Memorial and are acquainted with the scope and depth of Stalin’s brutal savagery.

This heinous Soviet crime left a great wound in the psychological and social development of the Ukrainian nation, which is still felt today. The magnitude and gravity of this atrocity remain unknown to the world and curriculum dedicated to the innocent victims would serve as not only a testament to those who perished but also as a tool to help educate our students of such atrocious crimes. Indeed, knowledge is power!

Let us be cognizant of the fact that this bill is about the future education of our children. How better to empower the students and recognize their aspirations and hopes than to hear from them directly. Recently, a teacher and her group of students were fortunate to learn for the first time about the Ukrainian Genocide of 1932-1933. In their words, not in

the words of experts or government officials, one can understand the depth of their conviction to seek the truth. In conclusion, please review the thoughts and writings of a teacher and her students:

"Bullying," states a teacher, "is the first step to genocide. Your identification of one person that you don't like can extend to more people. If the government gets involved, you can legislate and you can wipe out a huge group of people — a nation."

Whereby the student opines: "I think knowing about what happened in the past is a good way to prevent that from happening in the future."

Source: The Ukrainian Weekly

Thank you for your attention. The ***U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness 1932-1933*** looks forward to your support in advancing the knowledge of genocides to the students in the State of Oregon!