

Testimony before the Education Committee, May 8, 2019
Mark H. DeCoursey
Salem, Oregon 97301

SB 664 is a bill about genocides, and the WW II Holocaust in particular. Allegedly, the deaths of millions of human beings is a bad thing, and this bill is to prevent further Holocausts and genocides by educating the children.

I have come before you today to say that SB 664 is fatally short-sighted. Since the purpose of this law is to prevent human deaths by learning from the past, let us do that broadly and in full wisdom.

The deaths in World War II were not just Six Million, but more than Eighty Million. SB 664 Implies that the Six Million died because of the race, religion, politics, or nationality of the victims. Let me tell you that all of the Eighty Million deaths in World War II died because of their race, religion, politics, or nationality.

So let us do as SB 664 suggests and learn from the past. But let us go much further: Let us teach the lessons of peace in our schools to prevent war from ever happening again. We should not teach children the failures of civilization without teaching also the successes.

Let us begin by banning the violent video games our children are playing. Those corporations make billions from teaching our children war games and First Person Shooting games, smearing their virtual universes with dead bodies and blood, and gore. Why are we educating the children to believe that war and killing is a fun game?

Some people argue that war games are harmless. Those people should tell us whether rape and torture games are also harmless. Those games of extreme violence should be treated like drugs and pornography. Those games are a form of child abuse, and we should arrest anyone who permits those games to fall into the hands of children.

Do we have the guts to pass laws like that?

Let us censor the movies and TeeVee shows that are beamed into private homes: war movies should be labeled "Adult Entertainment" or "XXX." Children should not be subjected to pro-war propaganda before they are old enough to vote. Give our children a chance to grow up as decent human beings before we teach them the raw savagery of adult life as it has been for many of us.

This law would require the schools to teach our children about the detailed horrors of war. But I maintain this law would be child abuse unless we also offer solutions. We should teach children the lessons of peace. We should train children to help each other and to cooperate, to respect one another, and to use reason rather than bombs and bullets. We should teach children the great words of peace from Gautama Buddha, Jesus, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King.

Let us block the military recruiters who come to our schools telling lies about the glories of war and killing people. Let us ban the recruiting ads from our television

stations, billboards, and everywhere else they appear. Let us remove from public view the memorials to soldiers who killed other humans on the battlefield. Remember the victims, yes, but let the killers be forever interred with their bones.

The lessons of war are a part of the grim statistics of modern life. When soldiers return from killing foreigners, they turn the guns on crowds of American civilians. Hypnotized by death, veterans are killing American citizens and themselves, with twenty veteran suicides every day, and that number does not include the murders and suicides on deployment that are hidden from public view. (VA statistics <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/14/us/politics/veterans-suicide.html>)

War is a social disease. It is a plague and it takes everyone down, even the victors. We need to vaccinate society from the greatest killer of all: The War Culture.

I agree with SB 664 that atrocity begins in the hearts and minds of our children. I agree that we should learn from the past. But I disagree with cherry-picking the past for one political or religious group, ignoring all others. Remember not just 6 million, but the 80 million deaths of World War II.

Let us go to the heart of the psychosis and ban war from the lives of our children, from the classrooms, and from the places where our families gather.

Gentlemen, we can ban war from American life, but not with narrow, partisan legislation such as this law. Let us scrap this bill and write one that addresses the real problem. Let us ban the War Culture.

Thank you.