

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, BREADON, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPEN, SANTANA, WEBER AND LOUIJENE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- WHEREAS:** In 2021, the Massachusetts States House passed a bill, "*An Act concerning genocide education*" in which the Boston City Council supported unanimously in a City Council Resolution, that amended the Massachusetts General Laws to ensure every school district provides instruction on the history of genocide; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The act also established and set up a separate fund known as the Genocide Education Trust Fund for the purpose of educating middle and high school students on the history of genocide, with the Commissioner of elementary and secondary education in charge of administering the fund to assist in promoting the teaching of human rights issues in all public schools and school districts, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Beginning in the 2022, school districts are required to incorporate genocide education in both middle and high school. While the curriculum provided by the content standards included several examples of genocide that are not limited to the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the Famine Genocide in Ukraine known as Holodomor, the Cambodian Genocide, Rwandan Genocide, it is unclear which grades and classes at BPS currently receive genocide education and whether this requirement is met by all schools; *and*
- WHEREAS:** It is important for our students to recognize that national, ethnic, racial, or religious hatred can manifest in acts of extreme violence, and create immense suffering for marginalized peoples and groups. Such lessons are critical for our students to recognize the horrors of genocide, and to deter indifference to crimes against humanity; *and*
- WHEREAS:** We must continue to confront and combat the alarming rise of antisemitism in recent years. Since 2021, we've seen a rise in antisemitic graffiti in our high schools, colleges, universities, and public spaces, including the New England Holocaust Memorial. A United Nations Report by the UN Outreach Programme on the Holocaust has found that social media has fed into Holocaust denial and distortion, and that nearly 10 per cent of posts on Facebook, and 15 per cent of posts on Twitter that discussed the Holocaust hosted denial or distortion content. After October 7th, 2023, the instances of antisemitism saw an even sharper rise. We must do what we can to address the increasing levels of hate crimes; *and*

WHEREAS: Genocide is not only an atrocity of the past, but continues to be perpetuated across the globe. There are also many non-profits and civil rights groups in Boston that educate our public and combat hate, including the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, and Facing History & ourselves; *and*

WHEREAS: Everyone should be able to celebrate their heritage and religion without fear of violence, bigotry, and persecution. It is our responsibility as citizens to ensure that our students learn from history so that the horrors of the past will never be forgotten, and that the memories of the atrocities will contribute towards the prevention of mass crimes, genocides, and crimes against humanity; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the genocide education in Boston Public Schools. Representatives from the Boston Public Schools, non-profits that work to combat hate, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.

Filed on: February 5, 2025