

Senate Bill #664

Last September I accompanied many supporters of Alter Wiener, author and Holocaust Survivor, while he joined Senator Ron Wagner and student Claire Sarnowski addressing the Oregon Education Board about Holocaust and Genocide education for the state of Oregon. I am passionate about SB #664 because it is personal to me. Both my children graduated from Sherwood High School with Advanced Honors. They both said hearing of Alter's message and struggles assisted them to work hard at school and take every advantage towards education as possible.

Alter Wiener spoke at Sherwood High three times and for the Sherwood community twice. Every time there were people standing or turned away because the venue was over capacity. His impact of living history has prevented many students from dropping out, commit suicide or assisted healing from grief and depression. Alter has over 88,000 letter from people who learned about the Holocaust from him and thank him for his words and message. At the age of 35 he received his GED. When Alter spoke to prisoners after the talk a man who murdered a man for money said if he would have heard Alter speak he wouldn't have committed his crime. That speaks loudly why this education needs to be taught.

Alter didn't speak about his past until he went to Kinkos to enlarge a photo of himself and the young man behind the counter said, "You don't look like a criminal"? Alter told him that he wasn't a criminal, he was a Holocaust survivor. The young man replied, "What's the Holocaust"? Could you imagine loosing your father and your brother at age 13. Then taken from your family at age 15 to live through the atrocities at 5 concentration camps. Loosing 123 family members. Your home has strangers in it when you were liberated so you spend the night on your fathers grave because you have no idea what to do...and some young man at Kinkos says, "What's the Holocaust"?

The journey from Poland pre Holocaust, five concentration camps, the Middle East, New York to Oregon is in Alter Wieners book. He is an Oregon treasure. Speaking to our communities over 900 times we are honored he called Oregon home. Lets educate our youth with this history or we will be doomed to repeat if we don't.

SB#664.

Dawn Perazzo
Oregon Resident