Dear Senator Wagner and distinguished members of the Senate Education Committee and sponsors, and the Oregon Senate:

I support Holocaust and Genocide education in all Oregon Schools and support SB 664 that would require school districts in Oregon to provide Holocaust and Genocide instruction. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), states clearly and concisely the reason why it is so important:

"As students gain insight into the many historical, social, religious, political, and economic factors that cumulatively resulted in the Holocaust, they gain awareness of the complexity of the subject and a perspective on how a convergence of factors can contribute to the disintegration of democratic values. Students come to understand that it is the responsibility of citizens in any society to learn to identify danger signals and to know when to react." LINK

In today's turbulent times, students need to be aware of, learn, and understand not only the factual and objective history of genocides, but how these lessons apply to the present and the future. While there are abundant resources to tap in to for instructors to build curriculum, there is a looming shortage of human primary sources for Holocaust instruction, because survivors and child survivors are aging and soon there will be no more.

My mother, Alice Kern, survived Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen, and my father, Hugo Kern, survived Dachau. My mother spoke to schools and community groups in the Portland-metro area until she no longer had the strength or health to do so. I believe students today need to learn not only history but the moral lessons that go along with it: when ignorance, prejudice, and hatred are allowed to institutionalize and spread, humanity is undermined.

SB 664 must pass. Implementation of this bill would, in the words of USHMM ".... address[es] one of the central mandates of education in the United States, which is to examine what it means to be a responsible citizen."

Thank you for your consideration,

Sue Wendel

Beaverton, OR