

Dear Members of Oregon House Committee on Education,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 664A that requires school districts in Oregon to provide instruction about Holocaust and genocide in Oregon schools. Genocide studies should be part of high school curriculum to both honor the victims of these atrocities and learn from them in order to try and prevent such events from happening in the future. I support the bill's requirement that Oregon State Board of Education develops academic content standards for Holocaust and genocide studies. I request that the standards also include the study of Holodomor, the Ukrainian famine-genocide of 1932-1933 in Soviet occupied Ukraine.

As a child growing up in the Soviet Union, I don't remember learning about the Holocaust and about any of the Soviet genocides. It was forbidden to do anything but praise the Soviet regime, it was forbidden to talk about the Soviet – Nazi alliance prior to 1941 and their joint invasion and occupation of Poland in September of 1939 that started WWII. The memory of the victims of the Soviet regime was kept alive primarily outside of the Soviet Union and inside the hearts of the survivors who could not share their memories freely while the Soviet Union existed. Only after the fall of the USSR and the opening of the Soviet archives by some post-Soviet states, it became possible for researchers and historians to talk to the survivors and study historical records. These now form the basis of scholarly studies and books on Soviet genocides, some of which are available in our local library systems—"Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin" by Timothy Snyder, "Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine" by Anne Applebaum, "Stalin's Genocides" by Norman Naimark, and others. I am grateful to the scholars and researchers and volunteers for preserving this history and I wish I had the opportunity to study it at school. I hope that students in Oregon will soon have such opportunities to learn about the Holocaust, to learn about Soviet and other genocides.

The Ukrainian American community of Oregon is grateful to the Oregon legislature for unanimously passing in the 2017 legislative session SCR003 that designated November 25, 2017 as Holodomor Remembrance Day in Oregon. The resolution encouraged individuals, educators, businesses, groups, organizations and public institutions to observe Holodomor Remembrance Day with appropriate activities designed to honor the victims and educate Oregonians about this tragedy. One of the people who testified in support of SCR003 was a Portland State University student who told the story of her great-grandmother's family during Holodomor. Her great-grandmother lost 10 members of her family to Stalin engineered famine—her mother, her brother with his wife and four out of five children, her other brother with his wife and their only child. And such stories were very common with more than five million people killed by hunger during those two years in Soviet occupied Ukraine. This testimony is part of the legislative record and can be accessed through the Oregon Legislative Information database.

The Ukrainian American community of Oregon is also grateful to the US Senate of the 155th Congress for passing, by unanimous consent, Senate Resolution 435. The resolution recognized the 85th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933 and recognized the 1988 findings of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine that Joseph Stalin committed genocide against the Ukrainians in 1932-1933. The resolution also encouraged dissemination of information regarding the famine. The US Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor Famine-Genocide Awareness 1932-1933 would be happy to assist the Oregon State Board of Education with any materials and information necessary while developing curriculum about Holodomor.

Thank you for considering resolution 664A. I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of it. I also request that the State Board of Education adds the study of Holodomor, Ukrainian famine-genocide, to the genocide curriculum standards in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Terdal

Oregon Representative, US Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor Famine-Genocide Awareness  
1932-1933