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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senator Joshua Miller

Date Introduced: February 16, 2011

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended  
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 93

4 GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

5 **16-93-1. Legislative findings.** – The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

6 (1) On November 4, 1988, the United States government ratified the International  
7 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("Genocide  
8 Convention") which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Upon  
9 ratification, the United States government recognized that throughout all periods of history,  
10 genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity and was convinced that, in order to liberate  
11 mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation was required.

12 (2) The United States government recognizes that genocide still continues today, in the  
13 twenty-first (21st) century. The United States Congress passed House Con. Resolution 467,  
14 "Declaring genocide in Darfur, Sudan" on July 22, 2004. On September 9, 2004, the United  
15 States Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the United States Senate Foreign Relations  
16 Committee that "genocide has occurred and may still be occurring in Darfur." Additionally,  
17 President George W. Bush affirmed the Secretary of State's finding on September 21, 2004, when  
18 he addressed the United Nations General Assembly by saying: "At this hour, the world is  
19 witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my

1 government has concluded are genocide."

2 (3) The United States Department of Education says "education is primarily a state and  
3 local responsibility in the United States. It is states and communities, as well as public and private  
4 organizations of all kinds that establish schools and college and develop curricula..."

5 (4) The State of Rhode Island also has previously demonstrated its concerns and interests  
6 regarding raising awareness on the subject of genocide.

7 (i) In 2000, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill No. 7397, "Genocide  
8 and Human Rights Education," requiring the Rhode Island department of education to "develop  
9 curricular material on genocide and human rights issues and guidelines for the teaching of that  
10 material."

11 (ii) In 2007, the Rhode Island general assembly passed house bill No. 5142, requiring the  
12 state investment commission to divest its assets from targeted companies in Sudan.

13 (5) The establishment of free public education in the United States is intended to prepare  
14 citizens for participation in American social, economic, and political activities.

15 (6) The State of Rhode Island has also previously demonstrated its concerns for civic  
16 education, of which genocide education should be a component. In 2005, the general assembly  
17 directed the board of regents for elementary and secondary education to develop and adopt a set  
18 of grade level standards in civic education by August 31, 2007.

19 (7) Given the importance of the issue of genocide to the political affairs of the United  
20 States, as well as the responsibility of the state to educate its citizens, it is a fundamental  
21 responsibility of the State of Rhode Island to ensure that the critical subject of genocide is  
22 included as part of the curriculum in all public schools beginning at the middle school level.

23 (8) It is the judgment of the Rhode Island general assembly to mandate that every board  
24 of education in the state shall include instruction on the subject of genocide in an appropriate  
25 place in the curriculum, for all middle and high school students.

26 (i) Furthermore, it is the prerogative and desire of the Rhode Island general assembly to  
27 supplement this mandate by appropriating sufficient funding for a program to be created that  
28 trains educators and provides resources on how to teach this complex, but essential, subject. This  
29 program will be supervised by the Rhode Island department of education.

30 **16-93-2. Definitions.** – For the purposes of this chapter, the following words shall have  
31 the following meanings:

32 (1) "Genocide," as defined by the Genocide Convention means any of the following acts  
33 committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, sexual  
34 orientation, or religious group, such as:

- 1           (i) Killing members of the group;
- 2           (ii) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- 3           (iii) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its  
4 physical destruction in whole or in part;
- 5           (iv) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- 6           (v) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group; and
- 7           (iv) Providing educational information that will create a community that will condemn  
8 and not tolerate any future form of genocide worldwide.

9           **16-93-3. Powers and duties.** – The state shall adhere to the following procedures:

10           (1) The department of education shall make available curriculum materials and such other  
11 materials as may assist local and regional school committees in developing instructional programs  
12 pursuant to this section. The department of education, within available appropriations and  
13 utilizing available resource materials, shall assist and encourage local and regional school  
14 committees to include information on relevant genocides, including, but not limited to the  
15 Holocaust, Armenia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, Darfur, North American Native Indians, and the  
16 Spanish Inquisition. This should be included in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all  
17 middle and high school students.

18           (2) This instruction shall enable students to:

19           (i) Identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior  
20 relating to the subject of genocide;

21           (ii) Understand the scope of genocide and its consequences that are inflicted upon the  
22 victims by studying past cases; and

23           (iii) Recognize that genocide is a consequence of prejudice, discrimination and racism,  
24 which can be found here in Rhode Island.

25           **16-93-4. Implementation and accountability act.** – (a) The Rhode Island department of  
26 education is charged with the responsibility of implementing a genocide education program,  
27 whether it be an internal program or working with an external third-party institution. The  
28 department shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

29           (1) To oversee specialized annual training programs in order to enable educators to fulfill  
30 this chapter and teach the complex subject of genocide. It is recommended that these training  
31 programs be run in the state universities that are already equipped with both physical and human  
32 resources that can assist in the training. These programs should be run annually before the start of  
33 each school year;

34           (2) To provide assistance and advice to public and private schools with respect to the

1 implementation of genocide education and awareness programs;

2 (3) To meet with county and local school officials and other interested public and private  
3 organizations, including service organizations, for the purpose of assisting with the planning,  
4 coordination or modification of courses of study dealing with the subject of genocide;

5 (4) To prepare reports for the governor and the general assembly regarding the  
6 implementation of genocide curriculum by school districts as well as recommendations to  
7 facilitate the inclusion of genocide studies in educational systems in the state; and

8 (5) To designate a specific week on the school calendar during which all public schools  
9 in the state will study genocide education and awareness is highlighted and publicized as a focus  
10 of the curriculum of schools throughout the state.

11 (b) The subject of genocide shall be included in the civics grade span expectations and  
12 various examples of genocide should be included in each school district's middle and high school  
13 civic/social studies curriculum in order to reach all of the instructional expectations of this  
14 chapter.

15 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

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1           This act would require the department of education to implement a genocide education  
2 program.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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