

VERMONT HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL
HONORING LIVES LOST & STORIES OF SURVIVAL

...and you shall tell your children

Public Comment - Vermont Education Quality Standards
Debora Steinerman, President, [Vermont Holocaust Memorial](#)
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I am submitting these comments in reference to the Vermont Education Quality Standards as President of the Vermont Holocaust Memorial (VTHM), the only Holocaust remembrance educational organization in the state of Vermont.

The legislative findings specifically singled out “Acts of harassment and discrimination based on religious affiliation, including but not limited to anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, have been reported in recent Vermont news reports.” This is now nowhere to be found. As we know, unfortunately Vermont is not immune to antisemitism.

There are so many valuable lessons to be learned from Jewish history and the Holocaust, including political, social, and cultural lessons. The history and current uptick in antisemitism must be identified and properly understood if there is any hope for a time of respect for all – and for Holocaust history not to be repeated. Hate is far from extinct. In 2022, there were at least 204 antisemitic incidents in New England alone: a 32 percent rise from the previous year!

VTHM requests that you specifically include Holocaust education in the standards, however Jewish history is not only one of destruction and resilience but also reinvention. Therefore, we recommend, under the definition of “Ethnic Groups”, that you include “groups that have been historically subject to persecution or genocide”. Only by including this clause will Vermont students learn about the values, customs, contributions, and ongoing struggles of the Jewish people and other groups who have lost lives to, and have endured, genocide and persecution.

It is not possible to understand western civilization without appreciating Jewish culture, history, and contributions.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of our comments.