

My name is Eliza Doucet. I'm a 17 year old born and raised in Bristol, Vermont.

As I prepared for this meeting, I read through all of the materials and I noticed that in the Education Quality Standards groups such as Jewish people, are not addressed. Throughout all of known history, Jewish people have faced oppression but there's more to our story as a community. To me, one of the most important values that's passed down in Jewish culture is perseverance. Despite all the challenges and all the horrible things that my ancestors had to go through, I am here today in Vermont because my grandparents and their grandparents and generations down the line— the Jewish people —have continued to move forward with pride and devotion to our heritage. Vermont students would benefit from learning about our oppression and rich culture we've built off of overcoming it.

What I came here to ask of you is simple. In defining Ethnic Groups in the Standards, it's important that we, as Jewish Vermonters, are included, not just as an example of horrific genocide, but as a people who persevered throughout history against all odds. We are more than our tragic past. The interconnectedness of Judaism- both as an ethnic group and a religion- means that teaching about tragedies such as the Holocaust without teaching about us as a people and our culture, is essentially impossible.

I am asking you again, as a Jewish Vermonter and as a representative for my people, to define 'Ethnic Groups' exactly as it is defined in Act 1, a group of people who "have been historically subject to persecution or genocide." We must teach children growing up in Vermont, not only that Jewish people and antisemitism exist, but also that we are so much more than a historical horror story.

Thank you for your time.