

Hi Maureen:

Please post this comment with the October 3rd SBE public comments.

Jessica's connection was weak and much of her comments were lost.

I appreciate your help on this and

Thanks

Ted

My name is Jessica Meller, I am here to speak on behalf of the Jewish Communities of Vermont.

JCVT has consistently advocated during the Working Group's development process, and SBE's review process, for the Standards' definition of Ethnic Groups to be exactly as it appears in the ACT 1 law.

In ACT 1, Ethnic Groups intentionally includes part B, "groups that have been historically subject to persecution or genocide".

Vermont legislators included part (B) because they want Vermont K-12 students to learn about the cultures, contributions and struggles of groups, including Jews, who have been historically subjected to persecution and genocide. This aligns with the White House's National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.

In May 2023, President Biden issued this first-in-US-history nationwide alert to "confront antisemitism in America with urgency" and "U.S. National Strategy To Counter Antisemitism" road map.

Here is a quote in it from President Biden:

"Through this National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism,... I am proud to lead my administration's efforts to counter Antisemitism, and I urge all Americans to join me... The venom and violence of Antisemitism will not be the story of our time."

A key focus of this strategy is President Biden's "whole-of-society" call to action which includes K-12 Departments of Education, County Offices of Education, and school districts providing "readily available quality educational resources:"

President Biden's National Strategy calls on you to include Jewish studies in ethnic studies and history curricula - Jewish history, as well as lessons on positive, valuable Jewish contributions to America's national story, Jewish diversity, and manifestations of contemporary antisemitism.

President Biden highlights the need for students to also learn about the United States and global histories of antisemitism, including the Holocaust, and "histories of antisemitism experienced by Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews—who trace their ancestry to Spain, the Middle East, and North Africa—and their stories of exclusion, persecution, and expulsion."

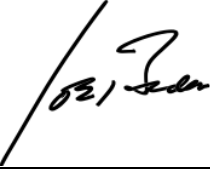
We at JCVT also believe genocides and persecutions should not be studied as stand-alone incidents in world history, but rather, explorations should include the history, culture, contributions, and resilience of the historically victimized groups.

To ensure that this happens, we again ask the SBE to revise the Education Quality Standards' definition of Ethnic Group so that it includes Act 1's part (B) as the legislature directed.

Thank you.



Through this U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, we are taking a historic step forward. I am proud to lead my Administration's efforts to counter antisemitism, and I urge all Americans to join me in ensuring that in America, evil will not win. Hate will not prevail. The venom and violence of antisemitism will not be the story of our time. The power lies within each of us to transform that story. To rise together against hate. To show the world who we are. And to restore the soul of America together.



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A key focus is President Biden's "whole-of-society" call to action which includes K-12 Departments of Education, County Offices of Education, and school districts providing "readily available quality educational resources:"

We call on state and local governments to include Jewish studies in ethnic studies and history curricula. Lessons should include Jewish history, as well as curricula on positive Jewish contributions to America, Jewish diversity, and manifestations of contemporary antisemitism.

More education [is needed] on Jewish American history and the valuable role that Jews have played in our national story.

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President Biden, embracing the most prominent definition of antisemitism, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s working definition, reiterates the United State's "unshakable commitment to the State of Israel's right to exist, its legitimacy, and its security [and] recognize[s] and celebrate[s] the deep historical, religious, cultural, and other ties many American Jews and other Americans have to Israel." <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf>