

April 2019
Paul Regelbrugge

Congressmen, thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Senate Bill 5612.

I am Paul Regelbrugge, an 8th grade English teacher at Meeker Middle School in Kent. Meeker serves a high poverty, high immigrant and refugee population in whose homes over 40 different languages are spoken.

From teaching about the Holocaust in Chicago, Buffalo and Spokane before Kent, the greatest impact on my teaching, and, therefore on my students has been the educational support and resources I've received from such knowledgeable people, particularly Seattle's Holocaust Center for Humanity. Thanks to the Holocaust Center, the deeply personal stories and lessons of the dangers of where hate, bullying and prejudice can lead come to life, and afford depth and meaning to students' experiences while coming of age. Indeed, when taught properly, students truly come to understand that *change* begins with each and ever one of them.

Quality Holocaust education makes a profound difference in students' lives. With engagement, comes buy-in. With buy-in comes learning. Even their test scores improve dramatically every year. Students want to read and learn so much more about what, why and how such terrible things could happen, and come to wonder what they would do then, and, more importantly, what they will do now in the face of so much hate today. Countless students weep, empathize and laugh along with Anne Frank wrestling with the cigarette-deprived Mr. Van Daan despite hiding for their lives. One student this year had literally done maybe five of 50 assignments all year, notwithstanding parent meetings, etc., etc. Now we've started our Holocaust unit, he demands to sit in the front row, does all his work, asks questions and wants to meet with me after school to begin a Holocaust book Club.

WHEN Senate Bill 5612 becomes law, *all* educators in this great State will be afforded the same expertise, resources and experience that has so helped me help my students.

Thank you.