



April 17, 2019

Dear Senator :

On behalf of Judea Reform Congregation, one of the largest synagogues in North Carolina, we write to urge passage of the **Gizella Abramson Holocaust Education Act**.

The season of Passover and Easter reminds Christians and Jews of the vital importance of building a just and humane society. For Jews this lesson flows from the story of the cruelty of the Egyptian Pharaoh who enslaved their Israelite ancestors and ordered the death of the newborn Israelite children. For Christians this lesson flows from the suffering and crucifixion of their Lord and Savior.

The people of Judea Reform Congregation believe that the Nazi Holocaust of European Jewry is a singular event in world history. At the same time, that such a catastrophe could happen so recently is a warning to us all of the terrible destruction that can be wrought by unalloyed hatred. More recent attempts to exterminate other groups (Rwandans, Bosnians, Yazidi, Rohingya) on account of race, religion or ethnicity further remind us that humanity as a whole has not learned the lessons from the Nazi genocide of European Jewry. Indeed, increasing numbers of youth and millennials are reportedly unaware of the Holocaust; a large number cannot even name a concentration camp like Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen.

The Gizella Abramson Holocaust Education Act would recognize the critical importance of educating North Carolinians about the Holocaust so that the next generation is equipped to make informed and responsible choices on questions that affect individuals, communities, states, and nations. Accordingly, it would direct the State Board of Education to introduce education on the Holocaust and genocide into the curricula of the state's middle and high school students and to develop an appropriate elective that could be offered in local administrative units.

We are delighted that the House, on April 16, passed this very bill, **H.B. 437**. We therefore urge the Senate to pass a companion bill which, once signed into law, would bring North Carolina into the company of about a dozen other states that already include Holocaust education in their school curricula.

As "people of the book," we support the sacred task of learning from history in order to prevent the repetition of the tragic mistakes of the past. We hope you will join us in the name of raising the next generation of North Carolinians to be a just, compassionate and peace-loving citizenry.

With best wishes,

Rabbi John A. Franken

Ziva Starr Raney, President