

Edward Perera

April 15

8th Greve Period 2

Argumentative Essay

## Respect

To Governor Inslee:

When I saw the insurrection of the capital by known Neo-Nazis wearing shirts saying 6 million wasn't enough, while I was learning about the Holocaust, I was shaken. Whenever anyone hears of an event like this, we all need to recognize the early warning signs that history is repeating itself, and we must not stand by without attempting to steer ourselves to a better future. This is why I think it should be mandatory to have Holocaust education. Holocaust education is beneficial to developing empathy and drawing connections to the early warning signs of an event like this happening again. Holocaust education does not just help with empathy towards antisemitism but with prejudice of all types. Some might say that the Holocaust is too frightening for middle and high schoolers to learn about. I respectfully disagree with that notion.

The *Echoes and Reflections* organization did a survey of undergraduate students on the effects of Holocaust education. "They indicate that positive outcomes of Holocaust education not only reflect gains in historical knowledge but also manifest in cultivating more empathetic, tolerant, and engaged students more generally"(Echoes & Reflections College Survey Pg. 2). This study also showed around a 10% increase in tolerance of others' beliefs of any kind.

The insurrection of the capital is not the only time I have been impacted emotionally like this. When I saw the Black Lives Matter protests being tear gassed, the imagery was so similar to

*March*, a book I read in 3rd Grade by John Lewis. Part of the reason I was impacted by the violence at the protests is because we were learning about the Holocaust and concepts such as the Pyramid of Hate. These concepts do not just represent the Holocaust, but racism and prejudice of all types. I believe Elie Wiesel said this best, “When human lives are in danger, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must - at that moment - become the center of the universe”(Wiesel 118). I wish that everyone who sees these kinds of actions immediately thinks, “Please, don’t repeat history.”

Some might say that these events in history are too scary and dark, and if we are to teach them we must tone them down. I say that the Holocaust is dark and scary. The emotional impact will be remembered for the rest of our lives. If the Holocaust is taught later, we will be no longer impressionable teens, or some may even decide that the Holocaust is fake and ignore any lessons taught. In other words, guided learning for this topic is very important and as teens we will be better able to learn the lessons about the Holocaust. Besides, the Holocaust was terrible - but people stood up. I was very inspired by Carla Peperzak's story of standing up and helping Jews into hiding as well as seeing to their well being. We can focus not just on the terrible situation but also the fact that people like Carla Peperzak did stand up. We can listen to their stories and be inspired by them to stand up as well.

My hope is that if one day, all states mandate Holocaust education, that we can overcome the challenges for all minority groups, and racism of all kinds will be noticed and stood up to. Every state that begins mandating Holocaust education will increase awareness for the states that do not. Mandating Holocaust education does not just help educate people in this state but encourages other states to follow suit and do the same. I wish to end this with the notion of

respect, something Carla Peperzak does with her testimonies about the Holocaust. I hope that before my life is over we can live in a world where everyone respects each other. When you respect someone, you accept they can have different beliefs than you and that you can disagree with those beliefs. However, if you respect someone you can not hate them or be unnecessarily mean, or allow an event like the Holocaust to happen. The best way to get to this world is through education and understanding of others' life situations. For this reason, I ask you to mandate Holocaust education in Washington state.

Sincerely,

Edward Perera

Sources:

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1958.

Holocaust Center for Humanity. Carla Peperzak Full Testimony, Youtube, October 22, 2019,

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2IJmdproHk&ab\\_channel=HolocaustCenterforHumanity](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2IJmdproHk&ab_channel=HolocaustCenterforHumanity)

Echoes and Reflections Organization. "U.S. College Survey." echoesandreflections.org, Echoes and Reflections, 2020,

[https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/themes/twenty-sixteenechoes/fileview.php?source=1&file\\_nm=2020/09/College-Survey-Summary-Article-September-2020-a.pdf](https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/themes/twenty-sixteenechoes/fileview.php?source=1&file_nm=2020/09/College-Survey-Summary-Article-September-2020-a.pdf), 4/23/2021.