



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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**HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE
WEEK**

**House Bill 4602 as introduced
First Analysis (2-14-02)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Marc Shulman
Committee: House Oversight and
Operations**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

In April 1951, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) declared the 27th day of Nisan to be Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Ha'Shoah in Hebrew) to commemorate the Warsaw ghetto uprising on April 19, 1943 and to memorialize the millions of people who were enslaved and murdered during the Holocaust. In 1959, the Knesset declared the day to be a national public holiday, and passed a law in 1961 closing all public entertainment on this date. The U.S. Congress established the 27th day of Nisan as Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1980, and other countries have declared the date to be a day of remembrance of those who suffered the atrocities of the Holocaust. Thus, legislation has been introduced to have the state declare the 27th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar as Holocaust Remembrance Day, and to declare the week encompassing this date as the Days of Remembrance.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would create a new act to establish the 27th day of the month of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar as Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the period beginning on the Sunday before that day through the following Sunday as the Days of Remembrance in this state, in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and in honor of the survivors, as well as the rescuers and liberators.

The bill states:

The legislature recognizes that the horrors of the Holocaust should never be forgotten. The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. In addition to the murder of some 6,000,000 Jews, millions more, including the handicapped, Poles, Gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also

suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

A key date in the history of the Holocaust is April 19, 1943, the beginning of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, when Jews, using homemade bombs and stolen or bartered weapons, resisted death camp deportation by the Nazis for 27 days. This date, which in the Hebrew calendar is the twenty-seventh day of Nisan, has been established by the United States Congress as a national Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the week surrounding this date has been established as the Days of Remembrance.

The bill says that the legislature encourages individuals, educational institutions, and social, community, religious, labor, and business organizations to pause on Holocaust Remembrance Day and during the Days of Remembrance and reflect upon the terrible events of the Holocaust, so that society will remain vigilant against hatred, persecution, and tyranny, and so that people will actively rededicate themselves to the principles of individual freedom in a just society.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Holocaust Remembrance Day commences at sunset on the 27th day of Nisan, and concludes the following evening. This year, the 27th day of Nisan is April 9. In future years, the day will fall on April 29, 2003; April 18, 2004; and May 5, 2005.

The bill is identical to Senate Bill 315, introduced by Senator McCotter, which passed the Senate on March 22, 2001.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government. (2-11-02)

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ARGUMENTS:***For:***

The atrocities brought on by Nazi Germany through its policy of ethnic cleansing resulted in the enslavement and murder of over six million Jews and millions of others deemed genetically or racially “inferior” – such as the mentally impaired, gypsies, Slavs, soviet POWs, and homosexuals. While the events of the Holocaust will never be forgotten, establishing a Holocaust Remembrance Day and a week-long Days of Remembrance will serve as a reminder of the horrors of the Holocaust, as a memorial to those who suffered great harm and lost their lives, and as an honor to those who lost their lives trying to protect and liberate the victims of the Holocaust. By encouraging individuals, educational institutions, and other organizations to observe the days of remembrance, the state will facilitate an open dialogue on the destructive effects on society as a whole when bigotry, hatred, persecution, and tyranny are allowed to run rampant, and on the importance of tolerance and human rights. This will better prepare Michigan citizens to, as the bill states, actively rededicate themselves to the principles of individual freedom in a just society.

Against:

The bill sets bad precedent by establishing a state observance in statute. Most state observances are established in legislative resolutions.

Response:

Recent legislative resolutions have established Holocaust Remembrance Day for a particular year. By establishing the day in statute, the bill would ensure that the day and the week-long Days of Remembrance would be observed every year. Furthermore, several other observances have been placed into statute, such as “Log Cabin Day” (the last Sunday in June), “Mrs. Rosa L. Parks Day” (the first Monday following February 4); and “Michigan Garden Week” (the first full week in June).

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Jewish Conference supports the bill.
(2-13-02)

The Holocaust Education Coalition supports the bill.
(2-13-02)

Analyst: M. Wolf

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.