



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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House Bill 4276 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Marc Shulman
House Committee: Great Lakes and Tourism
Senate Committee: Local, Urban and State Affairs

Date Completed: 2-2-04

RATIONALE

In 1951 the Knesset (Israel's Parliament) declared the 27th day of Nisan of the Hebrew calendar as Holocaust and Ghetto Revolt Remembrance Day, in memory of the millions of people who were systematically enslaved and killed during the Holocaust. Other nations also have declared this date a day of remembrance. In 1980, the U.S. Congress established the 27th day of Nisan as Holocaust Remembrance Day. It has been suggested that the State also declare this day as Holocaust Remembrance Day, and a week in April as the Days of Remembrance in Michigan.

CONTENT

The bill would create a new act to establish "Holocaust Remembrance Day" and the "Days of Remembrance" in Michigan "in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and in honor of the survivors, as well as the rescuers and liberators".

Under the bill, the 27th day of the month of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar would be Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the period beginning on the Sunday before that day through the following Sunday would be the Days of Remembrance.

The bill specifies that a key date in the history of the Holocaust is April 19, 1943, when the Warsaw ghetto uprising began. Using homemade bombs and stolen or bartered weapons, Jews in the Warsaw ghetto resisted deportation to Nazi death camps for 27 days. That day was the 27th day of Nisan, which Congress has established as a national Holocaust remembrance day. Congress also has recognized the week surrounding that date as the Days of Remembrance.

Under the bill, the Legislature would encourage "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 as a society we will remain vigilant against hatred, persecution, and tyranny and actively rededicate ourselves to the principles of individual freedom in a just society".

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."

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

BACKGROUND

The Hebrew calendar is a lunar calendar based on a 19-year cycle. According to the Internet website <http://www.jewishgen.org>, an ordinary year in the Hebrew calendar can have 353, 354, or 355 days. A lunar year of 354 days is about 11 days shorter than the solar year (one revolution of Earth around the sun), and the average length of the Jewish year is adjusted to the solar year over time by the addition of an entire month in the third, sixth, eighth, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of the Hebrew calendar, in each cycle of 19 years.

In the Hebrew calendar, over the next 10 years, the 27th day of Nisan will fall on April 18, 2004; May 6, 2005; April 25, 2006; April 15, 2007; May 2, 2008; April 21, 2009; April 11, 2010; May 1, 2011; April 19, 2012; and April 7, 2013.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The horrors visited upon European Jewry and other groups by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Holocaust have been well documented. By establishing a Holocaust Remembrance Day and a week-long Days of Remembrance in Michigan, this State would join similar national and international observances, which encourage citizens to recognize and remember the tragedy of the Holocaust. These observances also serve to remind people of what can happen when bigotry, indifference, and hatred are allowed to control in a civilized society. In addition, a remembrance day encourages people to reflect on what was done, and what could have been done, to save the victims of the Holocaust. As the bill states, Holocaust Remembrance Day not only memorializes the victims, but also honors the liberators, rescuers, and survivors.

In 2004, the 27th day of Nisan coincides with April 18. Because the Hebrew calendar is not aligned with the secular calendar, the 27th of Nisan will fall on other dates in future years. To recognize the actual Hebrew date, the bill would establish the 27th of Nisan as Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In the past, legislative resolutions have established a Holocaust Remembrance Day for particular years. By establishing the day in statute, the bill would ensure that Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Days of Remembrance were recognized every year.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Bowerman

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.