

NY governor signs bill on Holocaust education to counter widespread ignorance

State officials will monitor school districts' compliance with required lessons on genocide, as surveys show majority of young New Yorkers don't know the basic facts

By **LUKE TRESS** ✓

10 August 2022, 9:22 pm



Illustrative: New York Governor Kathy Hochul at the state Capitol in Albany, New York, July 1, 2022. (AP Photo/Hans Pennink, File)

NEW YORK — New York State Governor Kathy Hochul on Wednesday signed legislation that requires state officials to monitor Holocaust education in schools, as antisemitism remains at record levels in New York and surveys show a lack of knowledge among youth.

Hochul signed legislation at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City that aims to ensure schools carry out proper Holocaust education.

The law directs the state's education department to determine whether school districts are in compliance with Holocaust education requirements. The education department will also need to determine how non-compliant schools can meet the requirements.

New York State has mandated Holocaust education in schools since 1994, but surveys have found that many young people are ignorant of the Nazi genocide.

[A 2020 survey](#) by the Claims Conference, which represents Jews seeking compensation for the Holocaust, found that 63 percent of young Americans, and 60% of New Yorkers, did not know six million Jews were murdered in the genocide. In New York, 58% could not name a single concentration camp, 19% believed Jews caused the Holocaust and 43% did not know what Auschwitz was.

Get The Times of Israel's Daily Edition
by email and never miss our top stories

GET IT

By signing up, you agree to the [terms](#)

“‘Never forget’ is more than a slogan, it’s what we preach, but I want to make sure it’s really being taught,” Hochul said.

“Do you really tell the true story behind it, how people turned on their neighbors and became so radicalized, and they didn’t have the internet to do that for them, which is why today is even more dangerous,” she said.

In addition to the education law, Hochul signed two other pieces of legislation related to the Holocaust at the Wednesday event.

The second bill requires museums to disclose the origins of artwork that were stolen under the Nazi regime. Some museums in New York display stolen artwork without acknowledging its provenance, the governor’s office said.

The third requires the state’s Department of Financial Services to publicize banks that voluntarily waive wire fees for Holocaust reparation payments, in a bid to ease financial stress for survivors. Around one-third of New York state’s 40,000 survivors live below the poverty line.

Hochul, who has close ties to New York’s Jewish communities, signed the legislation in the presence of survivors and lawmakers who sponsored the bills.



“We are obligated to honor but also to remember, to truly remember that these are not just statistics, they’re not names on a wall, they’re true human beings and while that hatred may look different today it’s still out there,” she said. “It’s still targeting Jews around the world and yes, in our own state.”

She discussed high rates of hate incidents, saying the state had seen 570 antisemitic cases in the past year. The Anti-Defamation League reported a [record high number](#) of antisemitic incidents in 2021, and according to the New York

Police Department, [Jews are targeted](#) in hate crimes more than any other group, by far. [In New York](#), there were 416 reported antisemitic incidents in 2021, the highest of any state, and 24% more than 2020.

Since becoming governor last year, Hochul has repeatedly spoken out against antisemitism and taken action in support of Jewish communities.

“As governor of a state with 40,000 Holocaust survivors and the largest Jewish population outside of Israel, I take this hatred personally because I feel wounded as a human being to know that someone else is harmed in our state,” she said. “I don’t want the citizens of my state to live in fear ever so we will take action.”

There are around 65,000 Holocaust survivors living in the US, and about one-third live below the poverty level, according to [the Blue Card](#), a New York-based group that assists survivors.

In April, Hochul [announced](#) \$2.6 million in funding to support the state’s Holocaust survivors during a speech marking Holocaust Remembrance Day on Wednesday.

MOST POPULAR



1
Scientist sorry for posting chorizo pic, telling readers it's a star



2
IDF says it 'significantly' damaged Islamic Jihad during Gaza operation



3
Israeli scientist proves his far-out theory on interstellar meteor is down to earth



4
Wanted terrorist among 3 killed in IDF raid in Nablus, 40 injured



5
After mediating Gaza ceasefire, Egypt's envoy castigates Israel at Security Council



6
NY synagogue's looming demise highlights Conservative Judaism's struggles to survive



7
Lapid offers a new path to residents of Gaza: Livelihood, dignity and peace



8
'Grease' star Olivia Newton-John, granddaughter of Jewish Nobel laureate, dies at 73

Conversation 2 Comments

Log in Sign up

What do you think?

Sort by Best ▾

y [yaron.schwalb](#) · 10 hours ago ⋮

Will the lessons explain that it was the product of big government? , will it teach of the Nazis obsession re unified thought, intolerance of free speech, etc. Will it shows that Hitler tried to Join the Socialist party and then instead take over a workers party and rebrand it. Will it teach that t...[See more](#)

Reply · · Share

[Show More Comments](#)