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Senate Bill Creating Holocaust Commission Signed by Governor

Bill Puts Focus on Remembering the Holocaust

ST. LOUIS, Mo. – More Missourians will learn the invaluable lessons taught from the Holocaust thanks to legislation signed into law today. Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, sponsored the bill that creates the Holocaust Commission charged with spreading awareness and developing educational programs detailing the Holocaust in Europe before and during World War II.

Gibbons said teaching future generations of such a dramatic event in history is a key to not repeating the past.

"If you've ever visited the St. Louis Holocaust Museum, you know it's a compelling place. It's not fun, but it's compelling," Gibbons said. "This legislation is a way for us to take those lessons out on a broader, statewide basis."

Gibbons said the commission would work to focus on accepting people's differences.

"The commission will make sure there is an awareness of the Holocaust, of what happened and how it can happen in a civilized society," Gibbons said. "Remember, Germany in the 1930s was by no means a Third World country."

Jean Cavender, Director of St. Louis Holocaust Museum & Learning Center, said the Holocaust Commission will build on educational programs already offered by the St. Louis Holocaust Museum.

"The lessons of the Holocaust are fundamental," Cavender said. "We need to start teaching kids at an early age that differences are not wrong."

The Holocaust Education and Awareness Commission will consist of 12 members directed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The commission can sponsor programs or publications to educate the public about the crimes of genocide in an effort to deter indifference to crimes against humanity and human suffering wherever they occur.

The new law takes effect on August 28.

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