
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: ACR 58 **Hearing Date:** June 21, 2017
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Urgency: **Fiscal:** Yes
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Subject: Public schools: history education

SUMMARY

This resolution resolves that the Legislature urges the State Board of Education (SBE), county offices of education, and local school governing bodies to increase emphasis in their curricula on the engagement of the United States and allied forces in military activity in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the adopted course of study for grades 7-12 to offer courses in English; science; mathematics; social sciences, drawing upon the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, sociology; and other subjects. (Education Code § 51220)
- 2) Authorizes instruction in the area of social sciences to include instruction on World War II and the American role in that war, and encourages that instruction to include, but not be limited to, a component drawn from personal testimony, especially in the form of oral or video histories, if available, of American soldiers who were involved in World War II and those men and women who contributed to the war effort on the home front. (EC § 51221.3)
- 3) Encourages instruction in the area of social sciences to include instruction on World War II and the role of Filipinos in that war, consisting of an accurate history of the contributions of the Filipino American veterans who fought courageously in the United States Army for freedom and democracy in World War II under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur. (EC § 51221.3)
- 4) Establishes the Instructional Quality Commission and requires the commission to, among other things:
 - a) Recommend curriculum frameworks to the SBE.
 - b) Study and evaluation of instructional materials submitted for adoption.
 - c) Recommend instructional materials for adoption to the SBE.

- d) Advise and make recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE), including, but not limited to, what policies and activities are needed to implement the state's academic content standards, and bring the state's curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, professional development programs, pupil assessments, and academic accountability systems into alignment with those standards. (EC § 60204)

ANALYSIS

This resolution resolves that the Legislature urges the SBE, county offices of education, and local school governing bodies to increase emphasis in their curricula on the engagement of the United States and allied forces in military activity in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater during World War II. Specifically, this resolution:

- 1) States that the California Department of Education is charged with ensuring that comprehensive, unbiased, and accurate information is available and taught to pupils.
- 2) States that it is important for public school curricula to be inclusive and representative of worldwide historical events to enhance students' understanding and interpretations of the historical impact of events that take place outside of the United States.
- 3) States that World War II was an infamous international conflict that involved over 30 countries, caused over 70 million casualties, and marked unfathomable bravery and sacrifice.
- 4) States that military activity in the Pacific and Asia during World War II is referred to as the Pacific War and accounted for 36 million casualties, one-half of the estimated total number of lives lost in World War II.
- 5) States that the CBI Theater of World War II, which included territories in east and south Asia, was active from 1942 to 1945.
- 6) States that the United States government identified efforts to supply and support Chinese troops as crucial to mitigating threats from Japanese invasions.
- 7) States that due to Japanese occupation of key territories in China, the only way to provide supplies to Chinese troops was through a dirt road in the mountains of Burma.
- 8) States that American, Chinese, Indian, and British forces in the CBI Theater orchestrated their military activities to open the supply route in Burma.
- 9) States that the forces had limited resources but persisted through immeasurable challenges, including a lack of supplies, inadequate manpower, disease, and attacks from enemy troops.
- 10) States that through American leadership, the forces successfully reclaimed the supply route and built Ledo Road to assist Chinese forces in World War II.

- 11) States that the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater has not been widely researched or covered by literature and history books used in California public schools.
- 12) States that California is a diverse state and could be seen as the Pacific corridor to Asia.
- 13) States that it is important that California history books instruct pupils about significant efforts, battles, and events that took place in Asia during World War II.
- 14) Resolves, by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, that the Legislature urges the State Board of Education (SBE), county offices of education, and local school governing bodies to increase emphasis in their curricula on the bravery, sacrifice, and heroism of the United States and allied forces that engaged in military activity in the CBI Theater, and resolves that the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of the resolution to specified entities.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the resolution.*** According to the author, “World War II was a devastating event that affected many lives throughout the world. It was also an event that showcased great bravery, sacrifice, and courage. While history books provide many details regarding many memorable battles and victories, there is not enough attention given to military efforts which took place in the Pacific and Asia. The China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater was organized to reclaim the supply route through the mountains of Burma in order to provide Chinese forces with assistance and supplies to beat back Japanese invasions. American troops took the lead with assistance from Chinese, Indian and British forces and were victorious even with the lack of resources and manpower. There are veterans residing in my district that participated in the CBI Theater and helped build the Ledo Road that was used to supply Chinese forces. I believe our children deserve to learn of such bravery and heroism in their history books and this is why I introduced ACR 58.”
- 2) ***New History-Social Science Framework.*** The SBE adopted a revised history-social science curriculum framework on July 14, 2016. There does not appear to be a specific reference to the CBI Theater of World War II in the current framework. However, the framework does include the following, which could provide an opportunity to discuss the CBI Theater:
 - a) “How was World War II a total war? How did World War II’s actors, goals, and strategies compare with World War I?”
 - b) “The war itself was truly global and included battlefronts in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific.”
 - c) “To become oriented to the leading nations in the conflict, students continue to learn about the German, Italian, and Japanese attempts to expand their empires in the 1930s. As in Italy and Germany, Japan’s

authoritarian government, increasingly dominated by the military, controlled portions of the economy and furthered imperial ambitions. The expansionist goals of Italy, Germany, and Japan translated into specific instances of military aggression, first in China, then in Europe, and finally in the United States, that drew the Allies into war with these Axis Powers.”

- d) “Once war broke out in Europe, the Japanese took advantage of Hitler’s conquests in Western Europe to seize European colonies in Asia.”
 - e) “Roosevelt believed that Hitler posed a threat to the world unlike any other and that the United States needed to hold strong against Japan’s territorial aggressions in Asia.”
 - f) “Students can analyze the strategies employed by the Japanese military in their campaign to conquer Asia and the western Pacific and the United States’ response to Japanese aggression, using the question: How did America win the war in the Pacific?”
- 3) ***Fiscal impact.*** This resolution has been keyed fiscal by the Office of Legislative Counsel. According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, there is “no immediate fiscal effect, but future unknown cost pressures. The California Department of Education confirms that the next history content standards update is scheduled for 2024. To implement this resolution, the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) could add this content to the frameworks at that time” and there are “unknown cost pressures for county offices of education and local governing boards to purchase updated teaching materials, when the IQC releases new standards.”

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

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