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BILL: Senate Bill 416
TITLE: Education - Curriculum - Holocaust and Genocide Unit (Lessons of the Holocaust and Genocide Act)
DATE: February 13, 2019
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
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Senate Bill 416 declares the intent of the General Assembly regarding instruction on the Holocaust and genocide to Maryland students to ensure these tragedies are not forgotten and to gain an understanding of ways to prevent such events in the future; requiring public middle schools and high schools and certain nonpublic middle schools and high schools to include in the curriculum a unit of instruction on the Holocaust and genocide that is consistent with certain guidelines; requiring the State Board to develop certain guidelines by January 1, 2020; etc.

PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 416.

Local superintendents understand the intent of Senate Bill 416. We recognize the critical importance of our students studying the Nazi Germany mass murder of 6 million Jews and others during World War II. It was a time in history that must never be forgotten. We can assure the sponsors of the bill that the horrific acts that took place during the German occupation in Europe, as well as other genocides that have taken place throughout the world, are part of the social studies curriculum currently being taught in middle and high schools throughout our state.

However, as local superintendents we must continue to advocate for local board of education governance of teaching and learning. We strongly believe that it is critical that locally governed education policies and procedures remain under the authority of local boards of education. Each local school board must have the flexibility to develop individual curriculum policies and practices that reflect the specific and diverse needs of their system.

PSSAM again reiterates that we will continue to oppose all attempts to legislate curriculum, courses of study, or graduation requirements. We firmly believe that this role belongs to local boards of education working together with the State Board of Education.

For the reasons noted above, PSSAM **opposes** Senate Bill 416 and requests an unfavorable committee report.