

Dear Legislators:

My name is Maxwell Walstien, and I am a freshman at Wayzata High School.

In 6th grade, I wrote a research paper on the Holocaust, which inspired me to learn more about the subject. I am Jewish and my grandparents' families were greatly impacted by the Holocaust and violence toward Jews in Europe.

After some research, I realized just how important the act of learning about the atrocities that occurred was so that no one would ever have to live through that again.

In February 2020, I started a petition on change.org to ensure that Holocaust education would be in MN standards that quickly gathered over 1600 signatures in less than a month.

My school does teach about the Holocaust, but up to this point it was only in seventh grade, and very limited at that. What confused me even further was kids at my school not understanding just how bad the Holocaust was, even after learning about it.

The Holocaust is one of the most denied events in history and denial fuels anti-Semitism, which has been on the rise for years. Even here in the Twin Cities we have experienced painful anti-Jewish incidents at high schools.

Holocaust downplay or denial, whether intentional or not, severely hurts the Jewish people, and the best way to combat it is widespread, common knowledge of what transpired.

There are a lot of important things that students need to learn about history and civics, but schools need to prioritize teaching the Holocaust so that it never happens again.

Thank you,  
Max