

## California Holocaust Education Act 2003

By Edmund Lewandowski

The bill is AB2003. The reason why it is important is that it will shape the California education about Poland for the next few generations. The title of the bill is: "The Holocaust and Genocide Education Act". It is talked about as the first bill of this kind in the United States.

The legislators themselves say that this bill will serve as an example for other states to follow. The introduced version of the bill did not mention Poland's WWII suffering at all. Polish American Congress is comprehensively involved in making sure that the bill will accurately and proportionately focus on all groups of victims, including Poles and provide respect and dignity for the Polish victims of Nazi Germany. I would like to praise one of the Polish American Congress members in bringing this bill to the PAC attention. Gordon Black spotted this bill shortly after its introduction in February 2002. At first there were two organizations fighting for changes: Polish American Congress and Two Flags, a local Mendocino organization Mr. Black founded many years ago. We achieved at the first stage an addition of wording "Polish Genocide" to the list of other groups of victims. After deeper analysis of the bill we realized its significance for the generations to come. We are now in the process of asking for other changes.

Polish-American community wants to amend the definition of Holocaust to reflect all groups of victims, or at least four to five most significant ones. Also, in the proposed 12 member Commission we propose the number of appointed members to be proportional to the number of victims. The full scope of the Polish-American community efforts will be published soon on the [poloniasf.org](http://poloniasf.org) web site in the Polish-American Issues section under AB2003 efforts. Right now we have quite a bit of effort going on.

Parties involved include: Stan Kawczynski - candidate for State Assembly ([www.electstan.com](http://www.electstan.com)), Two Flags, Polish American Congress, California Polish-American Teachers Association and many other individuals.

Stan Kawczynski has been instrumental in bringing this bill to the present hold. The discussion on the text will resume on August 7, 2002 at the Senate Education Committee hearings, where we are hoping that the Polish-American community will have a chance to thoroughly present the issues.