

**From:** Maura Schreier-Fleming

**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 10:45 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments on Ethnic Studies Curriculum: Remove Anti-semitic content

Members of the California Dept. of Education:

Your outrageous inclusion of anti-Semitic content in an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is unacceptable. Please remove it.

**1. It is anti-Semitic to single out the Jewish religion.**

*The field also addresses the concept of intersectionality, which recognizes that people have different overlapping identities, for example, a transgender Latina or a Jewish African American.*

I would premise there's no difference of the experience of a transgender Catholic American from a Protestant African American. They both "look" the same. It is anti-Semitic to use the Jewish faith as an example.

**2. You cite history, but ignore it.**

*"Ethnic studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses many subject areas including history, literature, economics, sociology, anthropology,*

I didn't see a reference to the Civil Rights struggles and major contributions made by Jewish Americans, Andrew Goodman (recruited by John Lewis), Michael Schwerner, and Rabbi Abraham Heschel. (A link from one of your resources goes to the website Facing History and Ourselves with no reference to Goodman, Schwerner or Heschel.) Goodman and Schwerner paid for their support of the African-American community with their lives. By including them you just might actually help reduce anti-Semitism. This would be helpful as you cite as a goal of Ethic Studies:

- Reduced stereotype threat<sup>[1]</sup>

**3. Your curriculum doesn't support your own conclusions.**

*By asking students to examine and reflect on the history, struggles, and contributions of diverse groups within the context of racism and bigotry, ethnic studies can foster the causes of equity and justice.*

You ignore the contributions that Jewish Americans made to achievement of justice for African Americans. See item 2 above.

**4. Your identification of groups in your units promotes stereotyping, not understanding.**

*This one semester course will focus on the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, American Indians and Muslim and Arab Americans. This course will*

*also include an identity unit in which students will consider concepts related to their own personal, group and/or national identity (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation).*

You cite only one religious group for inclusion in your Ethic Studies program: Muslim Americans. Yet, reviewing the FBI Hate Crime Statistics (2019-2000) indicates that Jewish Americans suffered 60.2% of hate crimes in 2019 while Muslim Americans suffered 13.2%. You are showing your anti-Jewish bias by not including a unit for addressing religious bias against Jews. You promote anti-Semitism as a result. Here is the data:

<https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/topic-pages/victims>


*Religious bias (Based on [Table 1.](#))*

Of the 1,715 victims of anti-religious hate crimes:

- **60.2 percent were victims of crimes motivated by offenders' anti-Jewish bias.**
- 13.2 percent were victims of anti-Islamic (Muslim) bias.
- 3.8 percent were victims of anti-Catholic bias.
- 3.8 percent were victims of anti-Other Christian bias.
- 3.5 percent were victims of anti-Sikh bias.
- 2.9 percent were victims of anti-Eastern Orthodox (Russian, Greek, Other) bias.
- 2.6 percent were victims of bias against groups of individuals of varying religions (anti-multiple religions, group).
- 1.4 percent were victims of anti-Protestant bias.
- 0.9 percent (15 individuals) were victims of anti-Mormon bias.
- 0.4 percent (7 individuals) were victims of anti-Jehovah's Witness bias.
- 0.4 percent (7 individuals) were victims of anti-Hindu bias.
- 0.3 percent (6 individuals) were victims of anti-Atheist/Agnostic bias.
- 0.3 percent (5 individuals) were victims of anti-Buddhist bias.
- 6.3 percent were victims of bias against other religions (anti-other religion).

Your ethnic studies proposal is an effort to be more divisive in the community. The violence of student leaders historically in the African American community is troubling. More division in our communities and more violence is unproductive. I do hope you remove the anti-Semitic content when you present your recommendation to the State Board of Education (SBE) at its March 17-18, 2021 meeting. You can do more to prevent anti-Semitism when you do.

Regards,



Maura Schreier-Fleming