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Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:43 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Curriculum

To Whom It May Concern:

Wherever you stand on the political spectrum, I hope we can agree that education is exactly the place where our country needs to begin repairing. Prejudice is born of misinformation, and language matters. Details matter. They MATTER.

I have 2 children in high school here in Saratoga, CA. Last year, one of them was sitting in her classroom waiting for the biology lesson to begin. 2 boys, classmates, entered the room having just finished their American History class where the topic studied was WW 2. These boys goosestepped into the room and "heiled" when they arrived at their desks, the desks next to my child's. A 3rd boy, witnessing these events, spoke up: "Hey. Cut it out. (My child's name) is Jewish." So these boys said, "We are just messing around. (My child's name) doesn't care, do you (my child's name)? Does it bother you? Does it scare you?" The tone, as reported to me, was somewhere between defensive and taunting. My child replied that their actions didn't scare her, but they did make her question whether they were well educated, and she believed it was good that they were studying history.

Education is more than learning facts, timelines and army gestures. Without context, without understanding the deep roots of antisemitism, without understanding the power structures and threatening language and actions that still exist, these boys will perpetuate the kind of behavior that causes great harm to all Americans.

Please. I implore you. Make meaningful and immediate adjustments to the California curriculum as follows:

1. The inclusion of a meaningful definition of antisemitism.
2. No return of the derogatory language about Jews, Israelis, and Israel, with guardrails in place to keep such language out of the classroom in the future.
3. The addition of a sample lesson reflecting the diversity of Jewish Americans, including Jewish Americans from the Middle East and North Africa and Jews of Color.
4. Commit to complete transparency to developing the curriculum.

Thank you.

In hope,
Jennifer Copaken