

**From:** Mallika Kaur  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 1, 2020 10:04 AM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** Sikh inclusion in CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee,

I am writing today to request the meaningful inclusion of Sikhism in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for entry into the public record.

My name is Mallika Kaur and I have been a resident of California since 2010. I live in San Mateo and work as a Law Lecturer at UC Berkeley School of Law and a family law attorney at ADZ Law, LLP. I have a young daughter who attends an at-home day are/preschool, and we look forward to her future in the San Mateo school district.

*In my work with the products of our K-12 public school education--as someone who regularly teaches and mentors pre-college, college and graduate school students--I find a woeful absence of education about Sikhism. This is not due to a lack of interest on the part of students. They are fascinated by the history and faith culture of Sikhs, who live, work and study alongside everyone else in California. Inaccurate depiction of Sikhs, despite being a unique faith system for over 550 years, is deeply disturbing. Further, by not highlighting the unique culture and background of Sikhs, I believe we are feeding into the insecurity faced by Sikh children in schools, where they are often bullied for looking different. This hurts the overall physical, mental and emotional safety and wellness of all students in California!*

I am extremely disappointed that the Sikh community, which has been an integral part of California's history and economy since the early 1900s, is not represented in a meaningful way in the initial Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft.

There are approximately 250,000 Sikhs in California. A report by the Sikh Coalition found that turbaned Sikhs are bullied at a rate double the national average. I wish to reiterate that the inclusion of Sikhism, the world's fifth largest religion, in the model curriculum in a meaningful way, is an essential step in overcoming ignorance and in reducing bullying and harassment.

Specifically, I request:

1. A detailed lesson plan about the Sikh American community to be inserted into the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.
2. More specific examples throughout the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that focus on the myriad of *positive* Sikh contributions made over 125 years in California, to balance the current language's focus on the hateful backlash against Sikhs in the context of post-9/11 Islamophobia.

The Sikh Coalition and the Jakara Movement will be in communication with you soon, specifying the details of these requests. I ask that the recommendations made in their

forthcoming letter be incorporated into the final Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum on my behalf.

Yours sincerely,

Mallika Kaur