

From: Ella Parker

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 4:58 PM

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

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: SAVE ARAB AMERICAN STUDIES IN CA!- Additional comment!

To whom it may concern,

I wanted to add a few more pieces in addition to my previous comment that I sent in yesterday. All the points I made in that email still stand. In addition:

As an American Jew who has been educated entirely by the public education system in CA, NY and Texas, I think the Arab American Resource Center's campaign to demand that Arab American studies remains in California curriculum is essential. Arab American Studies should remain in Asian American Studies, and content on Palestine should be included in this curriculum as well.

Pro-Israel groups pretend to speak on behalf of all Jews. They do not. Anti-semitism (hatred of Jews) is not anti-Zionism (a political position against the project of Zionism). Ethnic studies curricula that conflates this is at best reductive and at worst extremely violent. I've been the recipient of education that represents my marginalized identities. Every student deserves to be rightfully represented in the curricula they learn from. Period.

I would also like to amplify my support that Pacific Islander Studies content includes coverage of the complexity and diversity of the Pacific alongside critiques of power and systems of oppression as seen in the work of Epeli Hau'ofa, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, and Kerri Ann Borja's UN Testimony on the Question of Guam. I also urge you all to approve line edits 384, 385, 386, 387, and 388, which delineate the inclusion of important PI studies resources, discussion questions, and distinctions between regions in Oceania into the ESMC. Thank you for your time, Ella P. 11/13/2020, Alameda County, CA resident and UC Berkeley student

On Nov 12, 2020, at 11:44 AM, Ella Parker <[email redacted]> wrote:

To whom it may concern,

- I present our list of demands to save Arab-American Studies:

- Include the Arab American lesson plan submitted to the California Department of Education by members of the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) advisory committee.
- Re-insert Arab American studies in its rightful place—within Asian American studies.
- Align all lesson plans to the guiding principles of ethnic studies, which are anti-racist, decolonial and liberatory.
- Reject debunked definitions of antisemitism that equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

Further comments:

- We know, from the demands for racial justice sweeping this county, that it is offensive and dangerous to shunt the histories and perspectives of people of color to the sidelines. These revisions are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in.
- Our children are once again being left to fend for themselves in an increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. California should be a sanctuary, not a place of danger for our students and their families.
- Young people in particular face the consequences of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Arab and Muslim youth are simultaneously invisibilized and targeted.
- For too long, Arab youth have learned little about their history besides offensive and racist images and stereotypes. Arab-American studies curriculum provides a critical intervention to these stereotypes in K-12 education.
- Pro-Israel interest groups should not define antisemitism. Definitions that name criticism of Israel as antisemitic are opposed by many Jewish organizations, both within the United States and internationally. These definitions violate our constitutional right to free speech because their application censors virtually all criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian human rights and equality. These definitions also downplay the main source of antisemitism in the United States, which is white nationalism.

Sincerely,

Ella (she/they), Alameda County resident and UC Berkeley student