

From: George Breslauer
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 6:57 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Legislators,

The idea of exposing students to objective and balanced information about the history of minority groups in our society is a worthy one.

However, the proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum does not live up to this standard. Most notably, it omits Jewish-Americans from the groups included in the curriculum. And it oddly includes an international political issue—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—while tacitly advocating that students boycott Israel. (Why just this issue?) Both the exclusion of Jewish-Americans and the biased and anomalous inclusion of this international issue threaten to delegitimize a curriculum that could otherwise provide benefit to our students.

The exclusion of Jewish-Americans comes at a fraught moment in our history. We are finding that, when put under stress and encouraged by some political leaders, our society is quite capable of intensifying anti-semitism and of doing so in murderous ways. The data show that, in recent years, incidents of anti-semitism nationally have increased in numbers greater than such incidents against other minorities (all the more so when measured on a per capital basis). Equally troubling, but less visible, has been the trend in Bay Area high schools toward students treating anti-semitic utterances as “cool.” This combination of the murderous and the casual is especially portentous. Casual anti-semitism becomes the seedbed within which overt and physically threatening anti-semitism grows.

The exclusion of anti-semitism from an Ethnic Studies curriculum ultimately lays the groundwork for aggrieved minorities to blame their circumstances on “the Jews.” The next generations of high school students must not forget that anti-semitism is one of history’s more murderous prejudices—and that American society has no immunity to it.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback.

Sincerely,

George W. Breslauer
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