
From: Safieh Saib
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 2:39 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies: What kind of state are we?

Dear Ethnic Studies Open Comment,

I was born and raised in CA and still live here. As an Arab American, I can tell you how important it is to support the inclusion of Arab American studies in the Asian American studies curriculum of Ethnic Studies. My siblings and I experienced tremendous Anti-Arab discrimination and bullying at our public schools in Torrance, CA that resulted in physical fights and classroom disruptions. Classmates continued this bullying in our Torrance neighborhood. Teachers, unfortunately, were simply incapable of seeing and understanding the racist basis of this bullying. This lasted throughout our education, and was particularly exacerbated by the anti-Arab tropes in our Social Studies curriculum. Don't let yet another generation grow up in racist ignorance when the solution is easy and accessible to all, and most importantly, just.

The racial disparities in the impact of Covid-19, the xenophobic targeting of Asian Americans as "vectors" of disease, and the national uprising in response to the murder of George Floyd point to the need for anti-racist education: All students need comprehensive Ethnic Studies in their K-12 curriculum to build empathy, unity and solidarity with each other, strengthening our movements for justice.

The ESMC is structured around the core pillars developed by the founders of Ethnic Studies in 1969: American Indian studies, Africana/Black studies, Chicanx/Latinx studies, and Asian American studies. Following a decades-long tradition in higher education, the ESMC includes Arab American studies within Asian American studies.

Leading Asian American scholars, including the National Association of Asian American studies, have issued statements defending the inclusion of Arab American studies in the CA ESMC.

Ethnic Studies has been linked to increases in positive personal, academic, and social outcomes for students.

In the post-9/11 era, exacerbated by Trump's Muslim ban, Arab American students are desperately in need of curriculum that reflects their histories and current realities.

TURATH (Teaching Understanding and Representing Arabs Throughout History) is a 2020 report researched and written by the teenage members of Arab Youth Organizing (AYO). According to AYO's findings, more than 66% of the students surveyed said they received most of their information on Arabs and/or Muslims from the internet or television; only 2.3% learned about Arabs and/or Muslims at school.

Sincerely,
Safieh Saib