

From: Leeka Kheifets
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:03 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ESMC

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I know that you have a difficult task ahead of you and appreciate your hard work, but I am very concerned by a one-sided political ideology, which reminds me of the Soviet Union, that still remains in the draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Given that antisemitism is on the rise, in this country and worldwide, you must proactively combat it and change anti-Israel elements in ESMC's draft. Criticizing Israel is fine, and that is done plentifully in Israel itself, but applying different standards to Israel than to all other countries in the world is anti-Semitic. Thus you should remove links to, and group advocacy of, virulently anti-Israel pro-BDS sites with malicious slander about imaginary genocide and Include Mizrahi and other Jews of color that fled to Israel to save their lives.

I came to America to escape antisemitism, and to see how it changed and how slowly antisemitism becomes main stream again breaks my heart. Please add specific lesson materials on antisemitism as a form of racism and bigotry.

I am a professor, who came to California over 40 years ago to escape antisemitism and indoctrination of the Soviet system. I had and raised my children here and worked tirelessly to make California better. For the future of the state and the country, I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

Thank you,

*Leeka Kheifets, Ph.D.
Professor, Epidemiology Department
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health*