

**From:** valerie\_carter

**Sent:** Friday, November 13, 2020 6:53 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

**Cc:** [email redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

November 12, 2020

Valerie Carter

Dear:

Instructional Quality Commission

California Superintendent for Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

Chair, California Board of Education Linda Darling-Hammond

I am writing today to ask you to reconsider changes that are being proposed to California's high school ethnic studies curriculum.

My first concern is the proposal to label criticism of Israel as antisemitic. Definitions that name criticism of Israel as antisemitic are opposed by many Jewish organizations. These definitions violate our constitutional right to free speech because their application censors virtually all criticism of Israel and all advocacy for Palestinian human rights. It is possible to criticize the actions of a country without hating that country. When we love a country and are worried that certain actions may cause harm or are morally wrong, it is our duty to speak up and point out why certain actions are wrong in order to guarantee a better future for the country that we love. Also defining antisemitism as criticism of Israel downplays the main source of antisemitism in the United States which is white nationalism.

**\*\*Please substitute:** Antisemitism is discrimination against, violence towards, or stereotypes of Jews for being Jewish.

My second concern is that there will be no mention of Palestine or lesson plans about Palestine in the curriculum. For too long students in the United States have learned little about the history and culture of the Middle East besides offensive and racist images and stereotypes. A curriculum that includes studies about the history and culture of all countries in the Middle East provides a critical intervention to these stereotypes in K-12 education. We need to give the students of California background information about the cultures and people who live in the Middle East in order to prevent racism and violent acts motivated by ignorance and hatred.

**\*\*Please include lessons about the history, culture and present conditions of the people of Palestine.**

Sincerely,

Valerie Carter