

From: Lisa Friedman
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2019 6:35 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Tony Thurmond
Subject: Proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am very concerned by the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) for California public schools. I support the idea of teaching ethnic studies, but implore you to make major revisions to proposed curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

The exclusion of Jewish experience in the ESMC is personally offensive and inconsistent with the very purpose of ethnic studies to promote inclusion and acceptance. It is particularly tone-deaf and indefensible in light of rising antisemitism in America and especially on college campuses.

The ESMC erases the Jewish experience in America despite the significant contributions of Jews to California's history, politics, culture, and government – and our community's longstanding struggle against hatred and discrimination.

The ESMC omits any mention of antisemitism even though **there are three times as many hate crimes in America against Jews as against Muslims**. The most recent FBI statistics record 938 antisemitic incidents and 273 Islamophobic incidents. Hate crimes against Jews rose by 37% according to 2018 FBI statistics, accounting for over half of religious-based hate crimes in the United States. Though a great deal of curriculum is devoted to Islamophobia, there is absolutely none devoted to anti-Semitism.

The over-emphasis of the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the definition of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) in the ESMC are both framed entirely from the vantage of proponents of BDS and fail to adhere to curriculum guidelines that require content to be taught in a manner that is "balanced", "inclusive", and reflective of "different perspectives." While Jews are an indigenous ethnic group to modern day Israel, and a significant minority in America, our voices are omitted in all curricular references to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

The one-sided framing of the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the ESMC creates a scenario where it's likely that Jewish students -- my child being one of them -- may be stereotyped, accused of dual-loyalty, harassed and forced to face social litmus tests. This is unacceptable.

I urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Thank you,

Lisa Friedman
A Californian and parent of a public high school student