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Soomin Chao

Chair, Instructional Quality Commission

California Department of Education

1430 N. Street

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To Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

We write to share our concern with regard to the draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) which we regard as not only inaccurate and misleading, but reflective of an anti-Jewish bias. We are vehemently opposed to the ESMC placing this curriculum in our schools without substantial revision.

While we share the Commission's dedication to diversity and the acceptance of minorities, we are chagrined at the failure to include many and manifold contributions made to the American experience by Jewish men and women and by the concomitant anti-Jewish slant apparent in the draft document.

The Failure of Omission

Appreciation of a people and their culture grows from knowledge of the achievements of those people. Knowledge of the achievements of any of the following individuals, for example, would enhance students' acceptance of Jews as people whose contributions have and currently do enhance the American experience:

Louis Brandeis

Benjamin Cardozo

Felix Frankfurter

Arthur Goldberg

Abe Fortas

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Stephen Breyer

Elena Kagan

Henry Kissinger

Elie Wiesel

Milton Friedman

Joseph Stiglitz

Jonas Edward Salk

Albert Einstein

Niels Bohr

Irving Berlin

Elmer Bernstein,

Leonard Bernstein

Aaron Copland

George Gershwin

Richard Rogers, etc.

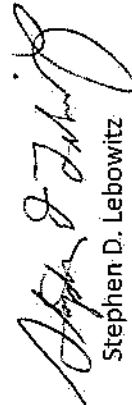
The list of notable Jewish men and women goes on and on. Thus, the failure of the proposed curriculum to integrate therein acknowledgement of the Jewish people's accomplishment is so glaring as to evidence purpose and design.

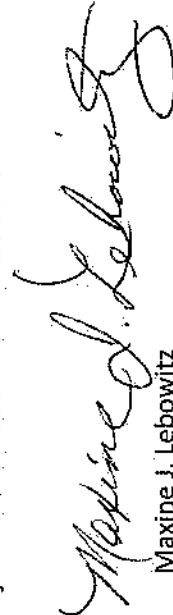
Anti-Jewish Bias

The proposed curriculum purports to address diversity and promote tolerance. Yet, the curriculum is void of attention to anti-Semitism, a leading scourge of the 20th century and rising threat to the 21st. It is no secret to anyone following the news that Jews have been attacked repeatedly in the recent past here and abroad. The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, the shooting at the Chabad facility in Poway, and numerous incidents of Nazi thought and action throughout the country illustrate the absolute necessity to promote appreciation of the Jewish people. In fact, approximately 60 per cent of hate crimes in 2017 were directed against Jews.

Rather than promoting appreciation of Jews, the proposed curriculum refers to Jews in derogatory terms. One need only examine the ESMC, Chapter 2 at 270 to witness anti-Semitic conclusions unsupported by fact. What is the purpose of including song lyrics disparaging Jews other than to encourage disharmony with them? What is the purpose of supporting the BDS movement if not to promote the conclusion that its factual underpinnings are true? Yet, any such conclusion is unsupported by actual facts.

The promotion of diversity is supported by objectivity. Objectivity is supported by facts, not conclusions. Our children deserve to be taught facts, not conclusions resulting from the bias of the curriculum's drafters. Thus said, we urge the Commission to reject the current Model Curriculum in view of the opinions expressed herein.


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