

Dear Members of the California Instructional Quality Commission:

As a resident of Los Angeles I commend your interest in examining the way ethnic studies are taught in California, especially in light of the current political climate. However, as a Jewish American, I feel that the proposed curriculum is unfairly biased against Jews and Israel, and perpetuates anti-Semitism. The past few years have seen record increased in anti-Semitic acts throughout the world, including the United States and California. The Tree of Life massacre and the Poway shootings are some of the most tragic and publicized, but less devastating incidents of harassment and vandalism occur frequently.

Teaching a curriculum that does not address anti-semitism, reinforces anti-semitic stereotypes, and fails to acknowledge the Jewish community's contribution to ethnic awareness does not fully represent ethnic studies. For example, page 240 of the course materials states that in addition to Cesar Chavez, "Arab, Chicano/a, Mexican, Filipino/a, black, and white farm workers founded [the farmer workers movement] too." There is no mention of Jewish involvement, although there were numerous Jewish labor leaders, including Jerry Cohen, who led the UFW legal staff, Rita Semel, Heather and Paul Booth, and long-time UFW organizer Marshall Ganz. According to Marc Grossman, Chavez's press secretary, "[t]he first institutional religious support for the UFW came then when boards of rabbis in big Eastern cities declared boycotted products non-Kosher...I especially remember frequently being with Cesar and Rabbi Sidney Jacobs with the Southern California Board of Rabbis."

Similarly, on page 241-2 the curriculum details the waves of immigration of Arabs since the late nineteenth century and the ensuing Islamophobia, yet, there is no discussion of the Jewish immigration, some of which was due to the decimation of Jewish communities in Europe during the Holocaust, and the ensuing anti-Semitism. In fact, anti-Semitism is not mentioned in the curriculum glossary.

Finally, on line 4957 a suggested topic for discussion is the Call to Boycott, Divest and Sanction Israel. This movement, known as BDS, fails to portray both sides of a complex, international political dispute. It is unfair and misleading to only represent one side, especially one that is blatantly anti-Jewish, anti-Israel, and in many cases, founded on erroneous facts.

Though the idea of ethnic studies is a good idea, these are just a few examples of how the proposed curriculum should be reevaluated and revised. I urge you to reconsider the curriculum as it currently exists.

Thank you for your attention,

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