

From: Ilya Gurin
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 9:25 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education:

I appreciate the improvements made so far in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am concerned by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that remains in this draft of ESMC.

The improvements made so far are material and significant. Nevertheless, by failing to specifically discuss Middle Eastern communities other than Arab Americans, the draft subordinates Ethnic Studies in California to the nationalist agendas of Muslim and Arab governments in the Middle East, and their decades-long campaign to wipe out ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities in their own region. It further engages in highly political score-settling against Jewish and Israeli Americans. I have lived in California for 30 years, completed both K-12 public school and public university here, and I'm proud of our state's diversity. But I fear what would happen to my future children if such an exclusionist curriculum were taught in their schools.

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,
Ilya Gurin
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