

From: Barry Glass

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 12:02 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] The New Ethnic Studies Draft Needs Major Revisions

To the CDE,

As a Californian and a Jew, I have major problems with the overall tone of the Ethnic Studies draft curriculum as well as some specific objections. The general tone seems to be pitting different groups against each other. The variety of different ethnicities in CA can be acknowledged and their contributions highlighted without the apparent comparisons of one group with another. After all, those contributions exhibit a set of basic values that are shared with all groups in CA. Commonality must be stressed to avoid an us vs. them mentality. Jews have felt the brunt of that kind of thinking throughout history nearly everywhere, but to a lesser degree in the U. S. Let's not undermine that.

I'm also concerned that true ethnicities are being obscured by painting with a broad brush. All Asians are not the same, ethnically. All Africans aren't either. Nor are all Europeans. Even Latin America is made up of very different groups with different cultures.

Jews certainly are not even all one color, let alone the same ethnically. To lump all Jews together is to settle on a few stereotypes about them, which I thought was the opposite of the purpose of ethnic studies. Jews who have never left the Middle East, for example have darker skin and are often mistaken for being Latino. Their culture is very much like the Arab cultures in which they lived and very different from that of German Jews. African Jews look like any other black person. In Israel, a minority of Jews are of European extraction. The same is true in CA. Sixty percent of the 500,000 Jews in CA are from the Middle East and North Africa, not Europe.

In the U.S. Jews are now considered white. This creates confusion, because so many Jews don't look European. Some look African. Some look Asian. Many look Middle Eastern. People are surprised to find out they are Jewish. A majority are not white and throughout U.S. history were subject to Jim Crow treatment, if not the same exact laws.

I don't want to go on too long, but I hope I have gotten across my fear that by emphasizing color or other superficial characteristics and confusing it with ethnicity, while at the same time stereotyping large groups of people lumped

together as the same ethnicity, the curriculum will reduce knowledge of different groups rather than increase it and create confusion, especially about Jews.

I also have tremendous problems with the treatment of Israel as somehow different from every other country in the world and holding it to very different standards, while confounding its history.

Sincerely,
Barry Glass
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