

Dear Ms. Chao,

Thank you for the work the commission has done on the proposed ethnic studies curriculum. I am glad that steps are being taken to correct the fact that so many of California's ethnic groups have been absent or misrepresented in the current curriculum. However, I do not believe that your proposed curriculum can be recommended or required in its current form. I was dismayed to see that Jews are completely absent from the curriculum--there is not one mention of them!! A curriculum cannot choose some groups over others! Especially in a time when incidents of anti-Semitism are on the rise, it is crucial to educate young people about who Jews are and what anti-Semitism looks like. One of the beautiful things about California is the sheer diversity of ethnic groups. We wouldn't want anyone to feel left out. Could you perhaps restructure the curriculum through a general discussion of ethnic identity, rather than as specific block units?

I was also disappointed by the section on Arab Americans. In my understanding, the goal of the curriculum is to introduce each group and explain the challenges that each has faced in the United States. The section on Arab-Americans delves into the Arab-Israeli conflict, an issue that is only marginally related to the goals of the curriculum. Entire college courses are devoted to the topic of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If you are intent on distilling the conflict in a 1-2 page summary, please consult experts who can advise you on providing sufficient historical context. Dr. Liora Halperin, at the University of Washington, would be an excellent advisor on this topic.

I am more than happy to provide further feedback and suggestions.

Best,
Yedida Kanfer