

From: Iris Eshel Bendahan
Sent: Sunday, August 11, 2019 5:56 PM
To: Tony Thurmond
Subject: Please Do Not Institutionalize a biased Ethnic Studies Program!

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

The State Education Department is attempting to institute a biased Ethnic Studies curriculum in their attempt to teach students to be unbiased! Please do not allow the State Education Department to eliminate the Jewish people from their new ethnic studies curriculum, as they've always been included alongside similar Hispanic, Muslim, Arab, African-American and other "minority" communities. Especially now, at a time of growing white nationalism and anti-Semitism and when Jews are being murdered in their places of worship across the country and world (eg, Poway, CA and Pittsburgh, PA synagogue mass murders for most recent reference), it would be a terrible injustice to exclude Jews from consideration as a discriminated "minority" group.

In addition to ignoring anti-Semitism, the curriculum includes BDS as a positive social movement; yet this is biased movement in itself labeling Israel as an "apartheid state." While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not without blame on both sides, and an unbiased curriculum might explore both narratives, the term apartheid is totally inappropriate and implies a foreign colonizer subjugating an indigenous people. The Jewish people, descendants of the exiled Israelites, have an equal and "original" right to the land, as do the Palestinian people. That right has been rejected by Arab leadership for nearly 100 years. Suggesting that the Jews are colonizers is outrageous and unfair. BDS is a hateful program aimed specifically to undermine the legitimacy and eradicate the existence of the State of Israel. Reference to BDS must not be included in our children's school curriculum.

In my comments above, I am referring to the following documents and pages in the proposed Ethnic Studies Curricula:

- Glossary: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
- Chapter 2: Pages 234, 237, 242, and 264-269

Thank you for your immediate consideration to correct these oversights and errors.

Regards,
Iris Bendahan

Amy Greene