

From: Penny Rosenwasser
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 4:24 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: AROC [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Arab American Studies

Dear Instructional Quality Commission,

I'm a white Jewish American who has lived in California for 40 years, and I'm an active synagogue member; and I've taught an anti-semitism / anti-arabism class at City College of San Francisco for 12 years with a Palestinian colleague. Plus I've published a book, "Hope into Practice, Jewish women choosing justice despite our fears," which focuses on anti-Semitism.

I've spent countless hours studying, teaching about, and speaking about anti-Semitism – and I can assure you that criticism of Israel is NOT an accurate way to characterize anti-Semitism, any more than criticism of the US is anti-American. An accurate definition of anti-Semitism includes discrimination against, violence towards, or stereotypes of Jews for being Jewish.

Believe me, I'm thankful that the Nazi Holocaust is taught -- especially given the rise of white nationalism, the main purveyor of U.S. anti-Semitism, particularly violent anti-Semitism.

It's ALSO vital for the Palestinian and Arab narratives to be taught (and not just included as an Appendix) – so that Arab American students see their histories reflected. In my diverse classroom, it's thrilling to watch students learn from hearing Jewish AND Palestinian narratives; they thrive from inclusion, they feel empowered, they learn to become allies to one another. This is what transformative education is about. Please don't deny them this opportunity -- please include Arab American Studies in California's Ethnic Studies Curriculum.

Thank you.

Penny Rosenwasser, Ph.D.