

As an educator for 52 years, thirty of them in the Ed School at U.C. Berkeley and the rest as a "real" teacher in "real" K-12 classrooms also as a Jew for the past seventy-six years, I am hurt, offended, and very worried about the proposed ethnic studies curriculum. I am in strong--very strong--agreement with the letter sent to the curriculum committee by the Legislative Jewish Caucus. Since the Caucus and many others have eloquently provided you with both content and direction regarding the need for you to rid the curriculum of your own prejudices, and your own limited view of ethnic groups, their vital role in American identity and consequently in the composition of American society.

I need to call your attention to an addition shortcoming of the curriculum, one that I'm not sure you'll be able to correct. The composition of the curriculum flat-out represents poor pedagogy. Because of its conclusionary construction form and its substitution of opinion and application of limited or no information for carefully presented data and experiences, the best, in its present form, can do is to teach stereotyping. I am certain that this is not the intention of anyone connected with the proposed curriculum. But that's going to be its net effect because at no time does the curriculum work to develop an inclusive sense of "we" or of why America requires an inclusive body politic or we'll cease to be America, let alone seek to become the City on the Hill.

Your task is huge, it's awe inspiring. But just think what our State has to gain is you decide to do it right. I spoke no English when I started school. I was put into the corner and was intended to remain there until I could, as they used to say in Canada in the olden days "talk while." We don't want ignorance or prejudices of adults to shape our children. I wish you the very best as you re-think your purpose and your task.

Yours very truly,
Nina Hersch Gabelko
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