

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard Kahn

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2020 7:56 AM

To: Jessica Costa

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Save ethnic studies – don't shut out Arab-American experience

Dear California Department of Education Jessica Costa,

I'm a constituent of yours and deeply concerned with reports that Arab American Studies may be cut from California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), under the false premise of it not being within the four racialized groups of Ethnic Studies.

The field's leaders of color, including the Association of Asian American Studies, Asian American Studies Department Chairs, and the Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition – are insisting Arab American Studies belongs in the curriculum, and that it remain.

As is evident in the spirit of AB2016 legislation, the California Department of Education must respect communities of color, and have deference to Ethnic Studies professors and practitioners of color for this project.

Efforts to undermine or water-down any critical components of the draft, and of Ethnic Studies as a field must be rejected.

I know you are well-aware of the targeted attacks on Arabs and Muslims by the Trump administration, and the demonization of the struggle of migrants and people of color throughout the United States. As a sanctuary state, California should continue to be a counterweight against that trend – not serve as a stamp of approval.

I will say that I'm aware of the past concerns similarly that the stories of Jewish constituents were not being fully upheld in the draft curriculum previously issued. As a Jewish person myself, I felt similarly that this was a short coming of that draft. On the other hand, I do not believe that we can equitably maintain that concern without demonstrating the desire to protect the cultural empowerment through education of other racial groups in the State of California--especially Arab Americans and Muslim citizens of the state, who have repeatedly been the subject of false profiling, cultural suspicion, and ignorant fear since the fateful day of 9/11 at least.

As a professor of Education and an influential scholar on issues of sustainability, I hope you will consider this opinion in the chambers of government for what it has been shown to be worth professionally within the academy.

Sincerely,
Richard Kahn PhD
Woodland Hills, CA