

From: Ilan

Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 9:05 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

My name is Ilan Eisenberg, I am a California high school student, and I would like to speak at tomorrow's meeting regarding agenda item 2A, the ESMC.

Dear California Department of Education:

I am a Korean-American, I am a Jew, and I am a proud Californian. Both sides of my family immigrated to the United States, a beacon of light for the oppressed and a bastion of tolerance for the alienated. The spirit of California epitomizes these very values undergirding our vibrant diversity, and it never ceases to inspire me. California is liberty, California is dignity, California is ceaseless courage, California is righteousness, California is free speech. California is what we cultivate in the next generation. There is no greater task than this cultivation, and it is imperative that our educational systems reflect the gravity of their mantle. This Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is an affront to all that California stands for. Its stated mission is to “bring students and communities together,” but it itself has driven a wedge between communities. It purports to “reduce stereotype threat,” but in its very lessons, it plants the noxious seeds of bigotry. This curriculum has failed on both counts. The Korean community, is outraged over their exclusion. A curriculum for California must speak for all of California, no matter how inconvenient it may be. And the Jewish community has spoken as one — the inclusion of classically antisemitic canards is fundamentally against American and Californian values of tolerance, and it calls into question the judgment of those creating this model curriculum. Despite recent revisions, anti-Jewish prejudices remain in the text: in a lesson comparing Jews to Irish-Americans, Jews are associated with “white privilege,” a highly offensive intimation. Jews are by far the most victimized group in terms of hate crimes year after year — over twice as much as the next largest recipient. I am appalled at the callousness and insensitivity to the plight of populations that are despised, that are overlooked, that are hurting. This bigotry is antithetical to our mission, and it is not a demonstration of the best we have to offer as a state. Such a reality is unacceptable. When divisiveness is the mantra in our educational systems, we should not be surprised of its results. We must reclaim our schools as places of education and discovery, not of ritual and dogma. We owe nothing less to our children.

Sincerely,

Ilan Eisenberg