

From: Eliza Hollingsworth

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 4:12 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter in support of Arab American Studies' Inclusion in CA ethnic studies curriculum

Dear CA Dept. of Education,

My name is Eliza and I am a Jewish-American alumna of the Oakland Unified School District, and a current UC Berkeley undergraduate. I am writing in support of the demands put forth by Arab and Pacific Islander American students and leaders, to include material on Arab American history and diverse Pacific Islander history in California's public school curricula.

As a student at Oakland Technical High School and at Claremont Middle School, I was never taught about Arab history. I believe it would have been a huge benefit to my own and my peers' education to learn about Arab history in California, and Palestinian history in particular. Excluding Arab Americans from Ethnic Studies curricula is bigoted and short-sighted. Teaching Palestinian history is absolutely not antisemitic and to suggest so is ridiculous. This conflates antisemitism with anti-Zionism -- as an anti-Zionist Jew myself, these are absolutely not the same thing. Those who state that the ESMC is antisemitic do not speak for me or for a range of voices within Jewish community.

I would also like to voice my support for ensuring that Pacific Islander Studies content includes coverage of the complexity and diversity of the Pacific alongside critiques of systems of oppression -- as seen in the work of Epeli Hau'ofa, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, and Kerri Ann Borja's UN Testimony on the Question of Guam. I also urge you all to approve line edits 384, 385, 386, 387, and 388, which delineate the inclusion of important PI studies resources, discussion questions, and distinctions between regions in Oceania into the ESMC.

In order to provide children with a comprehensive education, students should explore Ethnic Studies in a nuanced way in K-12 schools. It's an opportunity I wish I had in my own education.

Respectfully,

Eliza Hollingsworth

Oakland Technical High School C/O 2017, UC Berkeley C/O 2021