

From: Yahya Josh Cadji

Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 10:55 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reinsert Arab American Studies into Asian American Studies!

Greetings,

My name is Yahya Josh Cadji, and I am a World History teacher in Oakland, CA. I am also Arab and Jewish and completely devastated that Arab American Studies has been relegated to the appendix of Ethnic Studies, rather than part of Asian American Studies. Why does the CDE continue to give in to rightwing pressure rather than listen to Ethnic Studies teachers and practitioners, as well as Arab American community members, in saying that we deserve to be an integral part of the Ethnic Studies curriculum? We are not an after thought, nor is Palestine and Palestinians, who got completely cut. Do we not exist?

In addition, the definition of anti-Semitism used by the CDE is erroneous. As a Jew, I believe that criticism of Israel is NOT anti-Semitic. Equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism is simply an effort by rightwing forces to shield Israel from criticism, which is also why Arab American Studies, and specifically Palestine, are being eliminated from the curriculum.

Arab students deserve a curriculum that reflects their lived experience and histories. By putting Arab American Studies in the appendix, you are sending the message that we do not matter. Send the message that all Californian students matter by putting us in the Asian American Studies department, as we originally were.

We urge you to Include the Arab American lesson plan submitted to the California Department of Education by members of the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) advisory committee and to align all lesson plans to the guiding principles of ethnic studies, which are anti-racist, decolonial and liberatory.

Thank you for your time.

Yahya Cadji
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