

**From:** Abby Levin

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2020 12:22 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Concerns about Jewish representation in Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Hello,

I am a mother who has a 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade student. Our family is a Jewish Israeli-American family. We have family in both the United States and in Israel.

Thank you for removing the references to BDS from the original curriculum. The Israeli-Palestinian situation is a very complex situation (I have studied it at the college level and lived in Israel). It is easy to develop a one-sided approach, especially when examining it from the safety of living in the United States. I do not think it is fair to present one side (which is what BDS does) and it could just have easily been presented through the amazing movement Women Wage Peace in Israel which brings together Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, who simply want to end the violence between both sides. <https://womenwagepeace.org.il/en/>

**Please ensure the Jewish community that BDS will not be put back into the curriculum.**

I believe that the CA Board of Education not only has a duty to teach ethnic studies (which I support), but also to maintain a safe

environment for the diverse student population that you educate. In the last few years, the rate of Anti-Semitic attacks have risen in the United States. Jewish people are vilified by both the white supremacists on the far right and the anti-Zionist groups on the far left. We are in a unique situation where it is not always clear which side of the political spectrum will protect us. Teaching ideology from either the far right or the far left is dangerous to Jewish students. I feel you have a responsibility for keeping students safe and not foment anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist actions among my children's peers. My husband would simply not exist if his grandparents had not been able to escape to the British Mandate of Palestine during WWII. And trust me, they tried to go to the United States.

**Please include lessons on Jewish people as an ethnic group.** Antisemitism is on the rise. In the past few years white Supremacists have chanted "Jews will not replace us" in Charlottesville and Jewish worshipers were massacred in Pittsburgh. How bad does the situation for Jewish Americans have to be for us to be included in Ethnic Studies curriculum?

**Please do not use curriculum that assumes all Jewish people are white.** Though the majority of Jewish people in the U.S. are white, that is not an accurate representation. There are huge populations of Jewish people from Arab countries (who were oppressed in the Arab countries and most were expelled when Israel was created). There are also Ethiopian Jews, children adopted from all over the world who were raised as Jewish, Jewish people from multi-racial families, etc. The Jewish ethnic group is a complex group.

Thank you,

Abigail Levin

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