

From: Joanne Webster

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 10:25 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Asian American Ethnic Studies - Public Comment

Dear Tony Thurmond,

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

It has come to my attention that the proposed Sample Lessons and Topics as found in Appendix B of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum does not include a detailed history of the Japanese American community as one of the supplied sample lesson plans. The current draft of the curriculum outline has reduced the Japanese American experience down to a few bullet points under the list of additional sample topics. The lack of a full sample lesson on Japanese American experiences, will mean that those subjects will not be taught by teachers.

The Japanese American community has been an integral part of California history; from the farmers who made the "unfarmable" land flourish with produce, to the activists who challenged the supreme court against the incarceration of 120,000 people based of their race. This story is one that is of tremendous national significance, but is also a very uniquely California story as the majority of Japanese Americans incarcerated during the war had been living in California. Two incarceration sites, Tule Lake and Manzanar are located in California, and especially noteworthy.

My parents and grandparents were forced from their homes and moved to Gila River Internment Camp during WW II. My father chose to serve in the US Army. He served with distinction in the 442nd Battalion (an all Japanese American unit) that saw some of the harshest military campaigns during WW II. Last year, I visited Bruyeres, France where my father was wounded when their unit liberated the town from the Nazis. This small village in the Vosges Mountains still honor the 442nd with monuments and a display of their war efforts in their city hall. This small French village has not forgotten the sacrifices of the 442nd and we in the US should not either.

The current outline also leaves out the Vietnamese American, Korean American, and South Asian American groups as well as many others. I understand that the first draft of sample curriculums also included one on Pan-Asian studies and that has been removed from the most recent draft. I urge you to return that as a sample lesson plan. These are all critical to our Asian American history, and to leave this section out would be a disservice to the children who don't understand what it means to be Asian American.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Joanne Webster