

19 September, 2020
Berkeley CA 94708

California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Dept of Education,

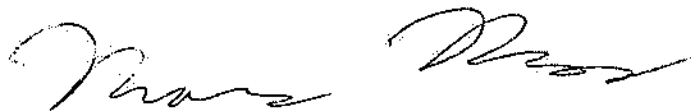
As a children's book writer who focuses on non-fiction history, in particular including "forgotten" stories of people who deserve to be known but aren't, often because they were women and/or minorities, I'm deeply distressed that at this time of supposed more sensitivity, you've decided to be less inclusive, rather than more inclusive.

Jews are marginalized more than ever by the decision not to include Jews and the Holocaust as part of Ethnic Studies in the California curriculum. This despite the rise in anti-Semitic crimes, despite the ugly language of white supremacy that "Jews will not replace us," despite the appalling general level of ignorance students already have about the Holocaust. Jews are considered a "successful" minority and thereof privileged, but that is still not always the case and historically it definitely hasn't been. Ask any Jewish student who has been "punished" at a public California school for being absent on Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur (which many schools still consider an "unexcused absence"). Ask any Jewish student who has been called on to explain anything Jewish to an ignorant teacher because they can't be bothered to do any research themselves and all Jews must be the same anyway. Ask any Jewish student in the UC system who has faced ugly anti-semitic chants or graffiti. This is STILL happening.

Contrast that to heightened sensitivity to Asian-Americans, also a "successful" minority, (long overdue) and the decision to dis-include Jews is even more appalling. There are few minorities as small in numbers as American-Jews, few who have been discriminated against for so long and so deeply. And now this.

We need more history, not less. More understanding, not less.

Marissa Moss

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marissa Moss', written in a cursive style.