

From: Vishtasp Soroushian

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 1:15 PM

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

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to changes in latest revision of the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear All Superintendent Thurmond et al.:

I write to express my dismay with the proposed changes to the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. It's a travesty in service of revisionist history, bordering on epistemicide. Public schools should provide students with factual content and teach them to critically analyze and assess different points of view. True learning requires us to acknowledge and confront the ugly sides of history and the geo-political present, not to white-wash or run from it. Such a goal is completely incompatible with the act of cow-towing to the will of interest groups at the expense of the development of our children into fully informed critical thinkers.

I am the proud father of a baby girl who just turned four months. While I am proud of my own public school education, I look back in dismay on all of the ways I was mis- or under-informed (potentially inadvertently) in my own schooling, especially when it came to the struggles of people of color and historically oppressed peoples. I am afraid history will repeat itself with my daughter. Instead of being able to take advantage of a true opportunity to learn about the plights of various peoples who have been historically pushed aside and ignored by our history books, she will be presented with an incomplete, inaccurate one-sided narrative by people who care not about my daughter's development and learning experience, but simply seek to hold onto Power. Succumbing to such influences is irresponsible. Your duty is to California's young minds, not to the Zionist lobby.

I urge you to reconsider these changes, and instead bolster the role of social movements in curricula, not mute them. In the end, you cannot contain a real education within the bounds of a curriculum or the walls of a classroom. Students will mature into citizens and see the falsehoods taught them for what they are. It's your choice whether you'd find yourselves in service to their maturation, or as an impediment to it.

Best Regards,

Vish Soroushian
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