

From: Valeria Garcia

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 3:11 PM

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

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Save Arab American Studies Public Comment

Dear Superintendent Thurmond and Board of Education Chair Darling-Hammond,

My name is Valeria Garcia, I am a resident of Los Angeles County and a graduate student at the University of San Francisco School of Education, and I am writing to you to ask that you re-insert Arab American studies in its rightful place, within Asian American studies. I would like the CA Ethnic Studies Commission to include the Arab American lesson plan submitted by members of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum advisory committee, align all lesson plans to the guiding principles of ethnic studies, which are anti-racist, decolonial, and liberatory. Finally, I want the Commission to reject debunked definitions of antisemitism that equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

The current revisions to Arab American studies are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in. Our children are once again being left to fend for themselves in an increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. Arab and Muslim youth in particular are simultaneously invisibilized and targeted. Arab-American studies curriculum provides a critical intervention to Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism in K-12 education. Will you defend Arab American studies by re-inserting it within Asian American studies?

Sincerely,
Valeria Garcia