

Tom Izu  
[address redacted], San Jose, CA  
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September 28, 2020

Re: PUBLIC COMMENT on Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Tony Thurmond,

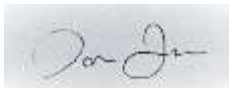
It has come to my attention that the proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum, in regards to the Asian American section, has failed to include a detailed history of the Japanese American community. The current draft of the curriculum outline has reduced the Japanese American experience down to one bullet point on page 91. This is unacceptable. 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 on their race.

I am the immediate past executive director of the California History Center at DeAnza College, a California public community college in Cupertino, CA, and the director of the Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative. The crucial civil liberties narrative outlined by the history of the scapegoating of Japanese Americans and their subsequent forced removal and indefinite incarceration by the U.S. government is the basis for many of our on-going projects and high school and undergraduate student internships. Failing to include the history of the U.S. concentration camps as well as the historic struggle to hold this country accountable for them would be a step backwards for California Ethnic Studies. Learning this kind of history of Asian Americans in this state has always had the effect of inspiring the growing population of Asian American youth to take advantage of civic engagement opportunities and contributing to civil liberties for all.

It has also come to my attention that this current outline also leaves out the Vietnamese American, Korean American, and South Asian American groups as well as many others. We are also aware that the first draft of the curriculum had a Pan-Asian studies which covered issues such as the Model Minority Myth. This is 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, despite being bullied and attacked by others for being Asian American.

Please reconsider the Asian American curriculum in your Ethnic Studies proposal to be more inclusive of many other groups.

Thank you,



Tom Izu

Immediate past executive director, California History Center, DeAnza College  
Executive Director, Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative