

Instructional Quality Commission
c/o California Department of Education
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814
Via electronic service to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov

September 30, 2020

Re: Comments to represent the Sikh community on the revised draft Second Field Review

Dear California Department of Education and Instructional Quality Commission Members,

The undersigned 25 California State Assemblymembers and Senators write to you with regard to the lack of meaningful representation of the Sikh community in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum currently under consideration. At a time of unprecedented hate crimes and xenophobia facing the Sikh community, the need to insert a lesson plan to teach about the Sikh community is imperative and non-controversial.

We are disappointed that the latest draft strips away multiple mentions of the Sikh community and its rich, century-old contributions to California to a single story in the context of discrimination in the aftermath of 9/11. Given the magnitude and concentration of the Sikh population in California, originating from Punjab, South Asia, their powerful immigration stories, their immensely positive contributions to the state for more 125 years, and their involvement in anti-racist and anti-colonialist movements, it is imperative that they are also included in a positive way which highlights their unique stories and contributions in a distinct context--not in comparison to other communities. Such minimal representation would result in further marginalization and misunderstanding of the Sikh community.

Over the last year, more than a thousand California Sikhs and 52 California gurdwaras (Sikh houses of worship) have expressed to the CDE and IQC why it is critical that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum specifically addresses the contributions of the Sikh American community. This will not only combat bullying, discrimination, hate crime, and profiling against the community, but also to celebrate their positive contributions to the history of California. The most recent draft shared for public comment removes specificity and therefore we deem it critical, at the very least, to include a lesson plan about the Sikh community.

We hope that the CDE and IQC will consider the Sikh community's recommendations and further recognize that a strong Ethnic Studies framework that advances anti-racist education while accurately representing marginalized communities is critical to California's well-being. It is

important that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum team reconvene the original committee of writers and experts to include the Sikh community as a stakeholder in the content creation.

Sincerely,

Frank Bigelow, Assemblymember 5th District
Anna Caballero, Senator 12th District
Sabrina Cervantes, Assemblymember 6th District
David Chiu, Assemblymember 17th District
Kansen Chu, Assemblymember 25th District
Ken Cooley, Assemblymember 8th District
Jim Cooper, Assemblymember 9th District
Bill Dodd, Senator 3rd District
Heath Flora, Assemblymember 12th District
Vince Fong, Assemblymember 34th District
Cathleen A. Galgiani, Senator 5th District
James Gallagher, Assemblymember 3rd District
Todd Gloria, Assemblymember 78th District
Adam Gray, Assemblymember 21st District
Timothy Grayson, Assemblymember 14th District
Shannon L. Grove, Senator 16th District
Melissa Hurtado, Senator 14th District
Ash Kalra, Assemblymember 27th District
Kevin P. Kiley, Assemblymember 6th District
Kevin McCarty, Assemblymember 7th District
Mike McGuire, 2nd District
Richard Pan, Senator 6th District
Jim N. Patterson Jr., Assemblymember 23rd District
Buffy Wicks, Assemblymember 15th District
Scott T. Wilk, Senator 21st District