

From: Jennifer Song

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 11:15 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Inclusion of Korean American history - Ethnic Studies CA

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing because I recently heard that Korean Americans may not be included in the upcoming Ethnic Studies course that will be required in high schools across California. I was really surprised and disappointed upon hearing this - and so I urge you to reconsider as a long time Californian.

The Korean American community has long helped shape the American landscape through its community activities, its contributions, and more. Furthermore, we can't discuss the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest without including Korean Americans and the ethnic conflicts that arose during that period and how this contributed to the violence against and marginalization of Asian Americans. Many Korean Americans in Los Angeles refer to the event as *Sa-I-Gu*, meaning "four-two-nine" in the Korean language (4.29), in reference to April 29, 1992, which was the day the riots started. Over 2,300 mom-and-pop shops run by Korean business owners were damaged through ransacking and looting during the riots, sustaining close to \$400 million in damages, (representing half of total damages done in L.A), and one death, Edward Song Lee. During the riots, Korean Americans received **very little aid or protection from police authorities**. Many had to arm themselves, with a variety of improvised weapons for defense. The lack of law enforcement forced Koreatown civilians to organize their own armed security teams. **Many Korean Americans who survived the riot have argued that this showed that people of minority races and ethnicities must group together for protection from a system that does not protect non-whites with the commitment or vigor given to whites.** The riots have been considered a major turning point in the development of a distinct Korean American identity and community.

In California and the U.S., Korean Americans are the 5th largest Asian American ethnic group, with biggest majority (25%) of Korean Americans residing in California.

I sincerely applaud your efforts in creating this important curriculum - please include the history of Korean Americans in California, especially as KAs are growing in influence and culture within the U.S. and helping to lead California's future. It is important for our children to understand the history so it does not repeat itself, but also to understand each other, and more importantly, ourselves as citizens living in community.

Best,
Jennifer