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From: Cheryl Stark

Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2019 10:14 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: Ethnic studies Curriculum

Dear Curriculum committee,

As a member of Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, I am deeply disturbed by the model curriculum currently being reviewed by The State of California, which openly promotes hateful boycotts against Israel and omits antisemitism as a form of bigotry. I am appalled that an educational effort meant to teach students about marginalized communities includes no lessons about Jews as a sizeable ethnic minority and frequent target of racism.

'The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.' Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing.

Glossary – includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” It then parrots more BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel's existence.

Sample Lesson Plans

Page 234 – Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives.

Page 234 – Promotes a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico

Page 237 – Uses unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country

Page 242 – Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.

Page 256, 264-269 – Encourages teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of Palestinian leaders.

With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.

As a California resident, taxpayer and voter, I would hope to see the State of California teaching inclusion and tolerance, rather than BDS, which promotes hate and division.

Cheryl Stark

President K'heleh Shel Nashim-Hadassah

Co-Northern Area President of Hadassah Southern California

Stacey Dorenfeld

Advocacy Chair - Hadassah Southern California's Co-President B'yachad Hadassah Group

Nancy Reiser

Co-President B'yachad Hadassah Group

Sandra Sadikoff

Immediate Past President

Hadassah SouthernCalifornia

Elise Saripkin Feldscher

Immediate Past President

Northern Area of Hadassah SouthernCalifornia

Michelle Conwisar

President Elect

Hadassah Southern California