

From: Kathy Masaoka

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 12:59 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Asian American and API Histories in Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

I am a retired LAUSD high school teacher and a member of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress which helped to lead a grassroots campaign for redress for Japanese Americans incarcerated in the WWII camps. I also helped to develop curriculum and materials to teach about the camps and redress, both important historical events from which students can take lessons. It is inconceivable to me - and frankly, shocking - that the California Ethnic Studies curriculum would not include the study of the incarceration of Japanese Americans, especially since it is cited so often by people when they talk about violations of civil rights and constitutional rights of people based solely on race. This history is not only American history but also California history with two camps, Tule Lake and Manzanar, and other assembly centers and detention centers located in California. There are many opportunities for students to actually see these sites and learn more first hand.

I understand that there are a lot of histories to include and only so much time, but I do want to say that covering the Asian American and Asian Pacific Islanders history in this piece meal and representative manner does an injustice to all of our histories and to the real understanding that our country and peoples are diverse. I am not only advocating for the inclusion of Japanese American history but for all the AA and API groups to be brought into the conversation. These studies should be given the space they deserve in studying US and California history. Students need to see themselves in their books and learn about their own histories. learn about the impact of racism on people of color, how people have stood up and how we all need to be part of the solution. This is real learning and lessons that students can take into their lives.

Thank you.

Kathy Masaoka

Co chair Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress