

From: Shana Silverberg-Rajna
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 7:31 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] draft feedback

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,
I appreciate some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am upset by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remains in this proposed draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Here are my major concerns:

- Israel is not an apartheid state. Israeli citizens include Jews, Muslims, and Christians and they have equal rights. Muslims serve in government including as members of parliament and the organ transplant list is blind to ethnicity and religion.

- To say Israel is colonialist, is wrong. Israel has a 2,000 year old history on the land. Israel has as much a right to exist as a Palestinian state.

- The Middle Eastern immigrant communities that have asked to be represented in the curriculum include Mizrahi Jews, Iranians, Kurds, Assyrian-Christians, Coptic-Christians, Yezidis, Baha'is, and Zoroastrians.

These diverse communities represent "an estimated combined total population of over 500,000, or at least 60%, of the Middle Eastern diasporic population in California". They should not be simply lumped together using the term "other Middle Easterners".

I am a life long Californian and now a parent of 2. Every Jewish person I know, has experienced anti-Semitism and I am differentiating this from anti-Israel attitudes. Ethnic studies must talk about the Jewish American experience as well.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

Thank you,
Shana Silverberg-Rajna (Fremont, California)