

**From:** JEFFREY CARMEL  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 11, 2019 2:12 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Sirs,

I have just finished reading the proposed new *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* (ESMC), and I have two serious concerns.

The first is the overall portrayal of the multiple minority groups singled out as victims above all else. There is no question that since its founding, there has been discrimination in America and true victimization. Slavery is the most obvious, but we colonized Indian lands, we marginalized newly arrived Italians, Catholics, Irish and Jews during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and we had a law in California prohibiting Chinese from immigrating. We rounded up Japanese and sent them during WWII to internment camps. And of course there is the whole complex issue of LatinX immigration. All of this is tragic. But the curriculum, in my opinion, fails miserably to balance the horrors of discrimination with the amazing opportunities that have also been afforded all immigrants and Native Americans. By portraying these groups just as victims will instill in our students resentment, hatred, and racial bias. I believe it imperative to also present the fact that so many success stories have grown out of the immigrant experience. Our children need to have grounds for optimism, not just resentment. The entire document is skewed toward the latter. There is a reason people risk everything to come to America, because it truly is a land of opportunity for all its citizens.

My second concern is the section on Arab/Muslim immigrants. As it pertains to the Israel and Palestine issue, the curriculum is factually extremely flawed. It refers to the State of Israel as Israel-Palestine. It denigrates both Israel and Jews. It supports BDS, the design of which, according to As'ad AbuKalil, Professor of Political Science and BDS leader at the University of California "...is to bring down the State of Israel."

Israel also receives sharp criticism in the draft curriculum, with little background information about the history of the Jewish state. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war, known in Israel as the War of Independence, is referred to as the "1948 Palestine War," and the creation of Israel is referred to as the "Nakba," Arabic for "catastrophe." There is no balance presenting the Israeli and Jewish narrative contrary to the stated guidelines for the curriculum to be balanced, inclusive, and reflective of different perspectives. Islamophobia is given extensive coverage, but there is no mention of anti-Semitism.

It is bizarre that any ethnic studies curriculum could omit devoting a chapter on Jews, the most oppressed people in the world for the past 2000 years. That the Jewish experience in America is absent is offensive and inconsistent with the purpose of ethnic studies to promote inclusion and tolerance. Why is there no mention of the 236,000 Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent now living in California who were expelled from their homes of 2,000 years in and shortly after 1948? The 60,000 Iranian Jews living in Los Angeles is one of the largest Middle Eastern diaspora communities in the United States. But no mention of them is to be found in the ESMC.

The ESMC should support diversity and inclusion, but it erases the American Jewish experience, singles out Israel for criticism among all nations, fails to discuss anti-Semitism, reinforces negative stereotypes about Jews, and will literally institutionalize anti-Semitic stereotypes in our public schools. Considering the flagrant rise in anti-Semitism worldwide and in the U.S., (the most recent FBI statistics record 938 antisemitic incidents and 273 Islamophobic incidents, with hate crimes against Jews rising 37% in 2018,) omission of the Jewish narrative is simply not consistent with the mission of the ESMC.

As an educator, I implore you to reconsider the current draft of the ESMC, delay the pending vote on it, and consider a rewrite with a more balanced, nuanced and optimistic narrative. It is for the good of our most precious resources, our children.

Thank you for all the excellent work you do.