

**From:** Ramond Takhsh  
**Sent:** Friday, September 13, 2019 12:06 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** Comment re: 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

We write to you to express our concerns about the recently drafted California ethnic studies curriculum and our wishes on what will be included in the revised model currently being put together.

Earlier this month we joined a coalition of Jewish, Armenian, Greek, Hindu and Korean civic organizations in its concerns about how the proposed curriculum did not accurately reflect California's diverse population and recognized some communities at the expense of others. Moreover, it failed to convey the beautiful, rich diversity in ethnicity and religion that comprised the Middle East by omitting communities such as the Assyrian people.

Assyrians are an ethnic Semitic group indigenous to the Middle East, with a history spanning nearly 7000 years. Numbering about 2-3 million in the entire world, Assyrians speak their own Assyrian language, also known as Neo-Aramaic or Syriac. The areas that form the Assyrian homeland are parts of present-day northern Iraq, southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran and northeastern Syria. The majority have migrated to other regions of the world, creating thriving communities in North America, Australia, Europe, Russia and the Caucasus during the past century or so.

Assyrians have been living in California since the early 1900s, as the first settlers moved into the Central Valley, Bay Area, and Southern California regions. They were forced to escape the cloud of persecution and genocide at the hands of the Ottoman Empire over a century ago, where over 2/3rds of Assyrians were massacred along with 1.5 Million Armenians and hundreds of thousands of Greeks. Through its resilience, the Assyrian communities have not only sustained their cultural and linguistic identity, but have also become an integral part of the California fabric.

Indeed, we contend that any California ethnic studies curriculum should include the history of California's Assyrian community and teaching about the Genocide of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek peoples. There is a plethora of academic and scholarly material about the aforementioned topics, of which we will be happy to refer you to.

We applaud and thank you for all the work you do in bringing meaningful change to California's K-12 public education system and we look forward to working together to provide our students with the most accurate interpretation of history in their curriculum. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you soon.

Sincerely,

Ramond Takhsh  
President, Assyrian American Association of Southern California

Rochelle Yousefian  
President, Assyrian American Association of San Jose

Sam David  
President, Assyrian American Civic Club of Turlock