

From: Loren

Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 4:46 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Arab American Ethnic Studies

Hello Tony Thurmond, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Instructional Quality Commission,

Today, I am writing to you as a Jewish American, California Community College staff member, social justice advocate, and labor organizer. It is profoundly concerning that Arab American studies are at risk of being excluded from Ethnic Studies curriculum. It is vital that Ethnic Studies include Arab and Palestinian viewpoints.

The Jewish community is divided on the issue of Zionism. Pro-Israel groups do not represent my views or the views of many of my Jewish friends and relatives. Taking a critical look at Israel is not inherently anti-Semitic. Treating the Jewish people as a monolithic group that stands unwaveringly in support of Israel is problematic.

The complex issues of Palestine, Israel, and western military involvement in the Middle East demands a nuanced approach. Meaningful discussions on the situation cannot occur without hearing the histories of people who are currently facing what the United Nations has repeatedly described as human rights violations. While the Jewish people have suffered much throughout history, we cannot use that pain to silence the voices of others who also suffer. It is possible and necessary to present the history of Arab people without falling into anti-Semitism.

Arab American students in California schools deserve representation in the curriculum, just like any other racial or ethnic group. It is also crucial for non-Arab students to learn about the richness of Arabic history and culture. Please include Arab American Studies in California Ethnic Studies.

Regards,
Loren Mindell
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