



August 12, 2019

RE: Comment on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

On behalf of Step Up! Sacramento, we write in support of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

STEP UP! is an organization of concerned individuals representing numerous human rights, education, faith-based, social service and social justice organizations. **STEP UP!** is unified by a set of principles that guide and frame the actions and priorities of the organization. These include fighting racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, authoritarianism and corruption that specifically targets, immigrants, Muslims, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, women, and poor and working-class persons. We stand as an organization that condemns all hate speech and hate crimes.

Today, anti-immigrant rhetoric, violent white nationalism and rising hate crime have roiled the nation. Racialized and gendered violence is already too much a part of the ordinariness of our everyday lives. This violence makes Ethnic Studies curriculums ever more important today as ethnic studies is necessary to increase race-conscious inquiry in our classrooms. Contrary to the critics of this model curriculum, Ethnic Studies courses are about encouraging democratic principles, and promoting different ways of knowing as well as producing and disseminating knowledge. Ethnic Studies curriculum in our high schools are tied to both academic development and civic engagement. Its courses and content are infused across disciplines and are taught to racially heterogeneous groups.

Ethnic studies courses foreground an alternative vision of U.S. history and culture. They reposition gender, class, race, and sexuality from the periphery to the core. These courses came about from a socially transformative civil rights movement that recognized unresolved racism and bigotry.

Given the numerous attacks on ethnic studies and the ways that it has falsely been deemed as promoting racial separatism and hate, it is time to demystify these assertions. We urge you to adopt the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Sincerely,

/s/ Rita Cepeda, Chancellor Emerita

/s/ Mario Galvan, Retired Spanish high school teacher

/s/ Rhonda Rios Kravitz, Dean Emerita

Board Members of Step Up! Sacramento