

From: Marion Cadora <mcadora@

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 12:00 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reinstate Pacific Studies and Arab studies into California ethnic studies K-12 curriculum.

I am writing to urge you to please consider reinstating Pacific Studies and Arab studies into California ethnic studies curriculum. These regions are crucial to K-12 education.

I was fortunate to attend UC Santa Cruz as an undergrad, and now as a PhD student, where I was able to take some courses on Pacific Island history. Historically, the Pacific Islands have been rendered invisible due to their geographic isolation and small landmass. The Pacific Islands often are eliminated from history books, curriculums, etc. due to this misinformed imagination of the region. Importantly, the US has deep ties in the region due to economic, military, and political interests and have greatly benefited from the narrative of invisibility of Pacific Island nations by overwriting their histories with the hypervisibility of technological progress and idyllic scenes of paradise.

There are countless examples of this but I would like to offer one illustration of this in the Marshall Islands. During the Cold War the Bikini Island was used as a site for nuclear testing. The indigenous populations were moved to another small island called Ebeye that has since become the labor ghetto of the Marshall Islands and often goes unseen in media and historical accounts of the Cold War. On the other hand, Bikini Island has become visually dominant in media and history books, inundated with pristine, sublime, and magnificent images of mushroom clouds that erased the violence war and narratives of indigenous population who were used as human guinea pigs for U.S. radiation research. Simultaneously the invention of the "bikini" (a two piece bathing suit named after Bikini Island) emerged in mainstream media to distract attention from the nuclear violence and recenter the sexual appeal of the female body. Similarly in Hawai'i the violence of US military presence is continually masked by the circulation of images of paradise, white sand beaches, etc. This process of "emptying out" and "re-filling" with pristine images and narratives of technology and paradise continues to mask US violence, benefiting their economic and military interests. Rarely in mass media or history books do we learn about these events from a Pacific Island perspective. Rarely do we hear stories about their resilience and resistance.

Eliminating Pacific Island studies from K-12 ethnic curriculum perpetuates dangerous historical accounts and imaginations of the region. Pacific Islanders will continue to be written out of their own history, when their voices must be centered in these discussions. All Californian's must learn about the history and culture of Pacific Islands from a Pacific perspective in order to flip neo-colonial attitudes. California has one of the largest Pasifika communities in the world living outside of the islands and these communities must have access to their own histories. As many of my Pacific friends and colleagues have taught me, recentering Pacific history through a Pacific Island lens allows their voices to be heard and offers a sense of empowerment and solidarity. Reinstating Pacific Studies and Arab studies into California ethnic studies curriculum in K-12 education will intervene the historical process of "emptying out" and "re-filling" with images and narratives that perpetuate dangerous colonial attitudes.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Marion Cadora