

From: Jill Schlessinger
Sent: Sunday, August 11, 2019 8:38 PM
To: CFIRD Ethnic Studies
Subject: Anti-Semitic ethnic studies curriculum must be changed

To: Ms. Soomin Chao, Chair, Instructional Quality Commission and the Instructional Quality Commission members

Dear Chairperson Chao and Commission Members,

As a California tax payer and the parent of a child entering high school in the California public school system, I was dismayed to see the anti-Semitic nature of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) curriculum currently under review. I applaud the Department of Education for developing an ethnic studies curriculum, but the current version erases Jews as an ethnic minority, falsely villifies Jews and Israel, and advocates for the destruction of Israel through endorsement of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. It also falsely portrays BDS as a liberation movement. No curriculum developed by the State of California should portray the Jewish people in such a disparaging way, a way that erases our existence, our humanity, our suffering, as well as our contributions.

I am especially concerned as a parent of a Jewish child in the public school system, entering high school next week. The fact that this curriculum is developed by the state of California give its lies and hatred legitimacy, and makes teachers complicit in the spread of hateful views of Jewish people. That it does so under the guise of ethnic studies, history, and liberation is particularly pernicious and dangerous to Jewish children in the school system - and to all Jews in the state and country. It's no coincidence that this curriculum has been developed in a time of increasing violence against Jews in this country, including a recent shooting at a Jewish synagogue in California; the curriculum is an expression of the hateful anti-Semitic views that are popular among both extreme right and left. Rather than promote such hatred, the curriculum should be grappling with the question - why does anti-Semitism appeal to both the right and left in times of economic uncertainty and social unrest.

I urge you to redesign this curriculum to include the suffering and contributions of the Jewish people, to be historically accurate, and to remove anti-Semitic political advocacy - and to take any action to reconstitute the curriculum development committee that may be needed to facilitate these changes. I further urge you to put safeguards in place to ensure that curriculum developed with taxpayer money is not used to erase or villify any ethnic group.

Thank you,
Jill

Jill Schlessinger