

From: Stephanie Muravchik
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:42 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Dept. of Education,

My name is Stephanie Muravchik and I live in Claremont, CA, which is in LA county. I am the mother of three Jewish children attending public schools. **Thank you for taking seriously the outpouring of concern about the treatment of Jews and Israel in formulating the recently released and revised Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. It is heartening to know our voices have been taken seriously.**

I also write to urge that you remove from the model curriculum some disturbing and invidious language that still remains and might nurture anti-semitic attitudes in American children today:

1) Remove all language that seeks to single out and demonize the world's sole Jewish state: please avoid slandering Israel as a "Settler-colonial" state even in a footnote; do not inaccurately portray anti-Zionism in the Middle East as analogous to anti-racism and anti-imperialist movements in the U.S.; nor single out Jewish NGOs for attack.

2) Avoid invidious language and assignments that are designed to set groups of students against each other and erase the experience of minority students, including the suggestion to have "Students ... write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege." (Page 6, Line 8166-67). This prompt leads students to the assumption that all Jews are white--which is very weird from the perspective of Los Angeles, where there is a massive Persian Jewish population, many of whom are in my family's congregation and in our schools. It also erases the larger Mizrahi Jewish immigrant population (Jews who fled Arab countries) as well as American Black Jews and Latino Jews. My children, for example, have a large number of Spanish-speaking cousins who live in Buenos Aires and who share our last name. Some have immigrated to the USA. **Also alarming is that this sort of language fans the insidious belief that Jews are responsible for racial and financial inequalities in America.** This grotesque and hoary carry-over from pro-grom-era Europe has prompted anti-semitic bullying and violent hate crimes (e.g., latest bullying of a young woman at USC and murder of a woman worshipping at Poway Chabad).

The purpose of this model curriculum is presumably to foster tolerance and mutual respect among children in schools today. This is a tricky business, to be sure, and I understand the Department is under fire on this topic. But that is why I believe it is imperative that your curriculum committee follow the old medical adage to "first, do no harm."

Thank you for your consideration.

Stephanie Muravchik