

**From:** eileenmarietorrez

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 9, 2020 9:29 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Note Regarding ESMC

Hello,

My name is Eileen Torrez and I am an Oakland based social worker writing in support of California's students and to urge you to include all the components of the Pacific Islander studies curriculum that are being requested by the PI community. While I acknowledge there may be some struggle to decide what counts as essential, I ask you to consider that the complex version of the conversation about is the only one students should be learning about. This education would not just be essential knowledge for PI students. I am a white Latina who knew absolutely nothing about Pacific Islander culture (despite having done East Asian studies and having studied & lived in India) before being taught by new friends after college. I am stunned by how much I thought it was okay that I didn't know - for example the deep connections in history, culture and political resistance between Chicanos and Pinoys. When I learned the issues different Pacific Island nations are currently facing today (which should absolutely be transforming American politics but are largely not because most of us are simply not aware), I felt a huge loss for how these diverse and resilient communities - and therefore many of my friends - are routinely invisibilized or oversimplified despite being so essential. PI studies can't be lumped in or subsumed under an Asian Studies umbrella, any more than the history of the US can be joined perpetually to the history of Central America simply because they are geographically close.

A separate, thorough curriculum for Pacific Islander history, politics and culture matters especially in California. Given the history of US intervention and the ways the community has had to adapt and is still adapting to pressures like racism and climate change, there is no way to cut corners in this field. It would be a disservice to all students to do so.

Best,

Eileen Torrez