

From: Rachel Wizenfeld
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2021 12:22 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] concerned about ethnic studies curriculum

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Jewish California resident who grew up attending public schools in Northern California, I am very concerned about some of the information that is being considered for inclusion in the proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum, as well as some glaring omissions about the founding of the State of Israel . My understanding is that in the proposed revisions, Jews and people of Jewish descent are not being indicated as a minority group, when of course we are a minority that has faced and continues to face discrimination and even persecution due to our religion and ethnic status. In addition, Jews are being singled out as a "privileged" group that is "white." This is not only blatantly untrue, it is offensive and dangerous as it invites derision and antisemitism towards Jews. In addition, some pro-Palestinian groups are lobbying that the creation of the State of Israel be taught as a "Nakba," a catastrophe, when indeed Israel has provided and continues to provide safety and freedoms to both Jews and non-Jews alike.

As a student who attended Albany High School in the Bay Area in the early 2000's, I was sent an anonymous, antisemitic death threat by a fellow student who actually sent it to me on a school computer. This incident traumatized me for decades. In addition, the animosity expressed by my teachers and fellow students for the State of Israel and the disregard for frequent acts of terror committed on Jews living in Israel (such as bus bombings and shootings), made me feel isolated, ashamed and unwanted in what was supposed to be a diverse and respectful public school environment. I fear that if the ethnic studies curriculum does not represent Jews as the vulnerable minority that they are, and does not discuss the persecution that Jews have suffered and the importance of the establishment and existence of the State of Israel for Jewish safety and vitality, then incidents such as I personally experienced will become more commonplace. Sadly, Jewish students in public schools will increasingly feel more isolated, threatened and unsafe.

I ask that you please consider my comments and ensure that the ethnic studies curriculum is fair, unbiased, respectful and welcoming towards *all* cultures and minorities, including Jews.

Thank you,

Rachel Wizenfeld
Los Angeles, CA