

From: Don Long

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 10:11 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Expansion of Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear California Department of Education, Ethnic Studies Committee,

I am writing to express my support of the Asian Pacific Islander School Board Association (APISBA)'s proposal to expand and include additional API sample curriculum and topics.

Asians are not a monolithic community, but are comprised of 49 distinct countries and hundreds of ethnic groups each with their unique language and cultural practices. Likewise, the Asian American immigration experience differs vastly, each with unique stories, challenges and barriers related to assimilation, integration and the American Dream. These experiences are shaped and moderated by geopolitics colliding with Western imperialism and colonialism that persist in America through explicit racist policies and implicit biases through the model minority myth and recent resurgences of racism as evinced by such terminologies as the China Virus, Chinese Pandemic and other racist monikers.

Asian Americans have been instrumental to the development of America as an economic engine and their stories should not be lost to the annals of history. It should be celebrated and recognized for their achievements and contributions. I want to take the example of the Chinese railroad workers. Have you ever asked what happened to all those railroad workers? That's a history that's been long buried just like the attempts to erase their contributions by excluding them from photos at Promontory, Utah. Would it surprise anyone that those Chinese railroad workers developed such expertise that they saved the Long Island Railroad from the verge of bankruptcy by repairing and re-laying damaged rails that were poorly placed on land that shifted due to liquefaction. Further, those Chinese Railroad workers were instrumental in laying hundreds of thousands of railroad tracks throughout the nation.

Similarly, Japanese farmers help reclamate the San Joaquin Valley into the fertile food basket and the Farm to Market phenomenon possible. Between the railways, ice from the Sierra Nevadas and connecting California's food basket to the rest of the nation resulted in California's transformation into the colossal economic engine it is today.

These are just a few example among countless others. To keep it brief, I urge this committee to support proposals from the APISBA and adopt expansion of sample lessons for the API curriculum. California's children deserve to understand California's rich history and the diverse and powerful contributions by Asian Americans.

Sincerely with Respect,

Don Long