

Date: August 14, 2019

To: California State Department of Education

Subject: Proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum (High School)

Re: Public Comment

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of the state of California and I have some concerns with the proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum for California public high school students.

One of the program's stated goals is for students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion. In its current form, the curriculum is not inclusive. It does not include any lessons about the Jewish community who are also an ethnic minority in our country. Jews are also frequent targets of racism.

Your curriculum omits any mention of "anti-semitism" as a form of bigotry. At the same time it promotes a very highly anti-semitic financial boycott against the state of Israel. Ignorance about the Jewish people is still a major problem in our society. Respectful dialog must include all ethnic groups that students may encounter in their lives fairly and equally (in all forms including news and the internet).

With the increased rise of anti-semitism in the U. S. (including most recently in Poway, California), the curriculum as planned, does a great disservice to the Jewish community globally, nationally and locally within our own state of California. It also does a disservice to our youth who will be presented with a one sided and very limited ethnic studies curriculum. I know you can do better!

I am a member of the Jewish community and as a Jew I have experienced anti-semitism here in California as well as other locations nationally and abroad. Since the beginning of time, throughout our history, there are way too many sad and tragic chapters that I have read about. I know what happened to 6 million Jews in Europe during World War 2. I know what happened to Jews living in Spain during the early 15th century. Many countries treated Jews poorly to put it mildly.

Another goal of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum is to pave the way for the eradication of bigotry, hate and racism. Some topics are extremely heated, controversial and anti-semitic. There are no simple solutions for solving the complex problems inherent with U. S. – Middle East relations.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS) is not set up for boycotting 1 single product. The BDS is blatantly anti-Israel. It is designed to demonize, and delegitimize Israeli Jews. The desired goal is to undermine the legitimacy of the nation of Israel,. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. It is surrounded by countries and leaders who desire its extinction.

If the California Department of Education is going to prepare lessons for high school students to include highly controversial subject matter regarding the Middle East, one must include all sides, perspectives and extensive historical background of all parties involved.

In the 1960's we boycotted table grapes to show our support for the Farm Workers Union that was being formed under the leadership of Cesar Chavez. The end goal of that boycott was not financial ruin for grape farmers. The end goal had to be a win-win for the farm workers and the farmers.

This is the time to create win-win opportunities for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laurie Reiner

Cc: State Senator Patricia C. Bates
State Assembly Member Tasha Boerner Horvath