

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,  
I am terrified and hopeful. I am terrified that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum under consideration does not include a study of the Jewish experience in America. I am hopeful because an ethnic studies class has the power to educate and change minds of our California students. I urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor I know all too well the devastating results of anti-semitism. And the hatred directed at Jews in America is on the rise. One need look no further than my place of work in Palo Alto (a law firm) which two years ago was spray painted with swastikas. Or hear chants of "Jews will not replace us" in Virginia. Or recount the murders in Pittsburgh. If the purpose of the curriculum is to enhance "cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equality, justice, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, etc." - how can you exclude American Jews? The State of California must modify this curriculum to remove anti-Israel bias and include education about the Jewish community.

The ESMC omits any mention of antisemitism though there are three times as many hate crimes in America against Jews as against Muslims. Don't omit Jews because The most recent FBI statistics record 938 antisemitic incidents and 273 Islamophobic incidents. Hate crimes against Jews rose by 37% according to 2018 FBI statistics, accounting for over half of religious-based hate crimes in the United States. Though a great deal of curriculum is devoted to Islamophobia, there is absolutely none devoted to anti-semitism. If you are unsure about including a religious-based culture in an ethnic studies class please consult experts - or contact the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Please do what is right - make the needed major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Thank you,  
Janet Herman  
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