

From: Harvir Kaur
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 12:26 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Deep Singh
Subject: Sikh Inclusion in CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee,

I am writing today to request the meaningful inclusion of Sikhism in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for entry into the public record.

My name is Harvir Kaur and I have been a resident of California since the day I was born in 2002. I live in Bakersfield California and am a high school senior at Ridgeview High School, which is part of one of the largest school districts in California: the Kern High School District.

Growing up, I was always different. I was a minority child along with multiple other groups such as the LatinX and African American community; however, the difference between me and other minority students was that no one knew who I was or, rather, what I was. I am a Californian since birth, but more importantly, I am also a Sikh since. In elementary school, I learned about race. In middle school, I learned about religion. I was disappointed at the fact that I never encountered the word "Sikh" until 8th grade, and when I did, I was shocked at the incorrect textbook definition. Furthermore, when I brought the incorrect definition to my teacher's attention, it was brushed away without a second glance.

I am extremely disappointed that the Sikh community, which has been an integral part of California's history and economy since the early 1900s, is not represented in a meaningful way in the initial Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft.

There are approximately 250,000 Sikhs in California. A report by the Sikh Coalition found that turbaned Sikhs are bullied at a rate double the national average. I wish to reiterate that the inclusion of Sikhism, the world's fifth largest religion, in the model curriculum in a meaningful way, is an essential step in overcoming ignorance and in reducing bullying and harassment.

Specifically, I request:

1. A detailed lesson plan about the Sikh American community to be inserted into the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.
2. More specific examples throughout the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that focus on the myriad of *positive* Sikh contributions made over 125 years in

California, to balance the current language's focus on the hateful backlash against Sikhs in the context of post-9/11 Islamophobia.

The Sikh Coalition and the Jakara Movement will be in communication with you soon, specifying the details of these requests. I ask that the recommendations made in their forthcoming letter be incorporated into the final Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum on my behalf.

Sincerely,

Harvir Kaur