

Senator Scott Wiener, Chair
Assemblymember Todd Gloria, Vice Chair
President pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes
Assemblymember Susan Eggman
Senator Cathleen Galgiani
Assemblymember Evan Low
Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara



August 7, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

We write to inform you that the California Legislative Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Caucus - comprised of LGBTQ legislators and statewide officers - has serious concern with the current draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). We have enormous respect for the Instructional Quality Commission, which oversees an exhaustive and deliberative process for curriculum development, and we believe deeply in the critical importance of ethnic studies.

However, in its current form, the ESMC omits the American Jewish experience, ignores anti-Semitism, and, indeed, institutionalizes the teaching of antisemitic stereotypes in our public schools. We cannot support such an extreme approach to a community that has experienced millennia of oppression, including genocide, and that continues to experience hate-based attacks in California and throughout the country and the world.

California's Legislative LGBTQ Caucus was formed in 2002 to create a forum for California Legislators to discuss issues that affect LGBTQ Californians, to promote LGBTQ-focused legislation, and to further the goal of equality and justice for all Californians. California was the first state in the country to form an official caucus of openly-LGBTQ state legislators.

An LGBTQ Caucus priority is advocating for diversity and inclusion of all people, especially our most marginalized populations. To that end, we believe it is incredibly important that the curriculum taught in our public schools not contribute to the marginalization or discrimination of any population. Without significant edits, we fear the ESMC will not meet this goal with respect to the Jewish community. We strongly urge you to reconsider and make serious adjustments to the curriculum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Wiener".

SCOTT WIENER
Senator, 11th Senate District
Chair, California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Gloria".

TODD GLORIA
Assemblymember, 78th Assembly District
Vice-Chair, California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus

Ms. Soomin Chao

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CC: The Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Jamie Callahan, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director of the California State Board of Education
Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President of the California State Board of Education
Dr. Stephanie Gregson, Director, Instructional Quality Commission, and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Performance, Planning & Technology Branch
Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Teaching & Learning Support Branch