

From: Caryn Berzack

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 7:33 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Comments

Good morning,

I am Caryn Berzack a US Citizen, immigrant and Jew, I am horrified to see what is going on in this country. The fact that in a recent survey 63 % of millennial Americans did not know that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. The fact that Jewish children are bullied on campus for being Zionists and wanting a Jewish homeland. The fact that anti-Semitic attacks are at an all time high in 2019. This requires our educational system addressing this dreadful form of racism - Education is the only way.

We ask for full transparency in curriculum development and implementation. Unfortunately, we have felt a breach in this supposed-to-be communicative relationship when we received last-minute decisions. The announcement of an additional chapter was announced just hours prior to the IQC meeting on August 13th. The public commenting period which commences on September 1, is meant to give the community the opportunity to provide feedback on any issues it has with the curriculum prior to its final round of revisions. However, how can we do so if we are not given this supplemental content in time? Why is it being hidden? These factors only further my community's uneasiness to the intentions behind it. I am worried this chapter will be the source of more BDS.

Many of the citations in this curriculum are from sources that promote BDS/anti-Israel authors and this raises concerns on what teachers will find when they use the sources for supplemental content.

The chapter on American Jews compares American Jews to Irish Americans and teaches how Jewish Americans have become a privileged ethnicity. Have you forgotten that we lost 1/3 of our population to Genocide about 80 years ago.

It is terrifying as a Jew with the rise in antisemitism during the last year because Jewish Americans are hated by both the left and the right. Jews are compared to white supremacists and blames Jews for racial injustice in America. Jews have never always been discriminated against, hated, and of course, the target of several violent and deathly attacks. For a curriculum whose goal it is to educate about minorities and their struggles, this would in fact be doing the opposite by contributing to the misunderstandings of Jewish Americans and thus fueling the targeted hatred we experience.

I urge you to understand the power and consequences in your decisions by:

1. Removing all citations that include anti-Israel sentiment
2. Rewriting the chapter on Jewish Americans to reflect a more accurate and inclusive Jewish narrative

3. Ensure that any additions to the curriculum will remain free of discriminatory content, such as antisemitic rhetoric, including but not restricted to mentions of BDS.

I thank you for your time and attention and look forward to hearing positive improvements. It is indeed a travesty to include such one-sided untruths in your curriculum.

Thanks,
Caryn Berzack