

From: Nirvair Singh
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2020 11:39 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
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 Nirvair Singh. I have been a resident of California since 1988. I have attended multiple colleges and universities here. I live in Cupertino and work as a Software Engineer and part-time college instructor. I have two children who are born and raised in the Bay Area. Both attended elementary, middle and high schools in Cupertino; one is done with college and the other is graduating this year. I sadly remember having discussions with both about the lack of coverage of Sikhism and Punjabi ethnicity in their history and social studies books.

As a community activist, I have been invited to speak about Sikhism by different high schools in Santa Clara and Alameda counties. I have always received feedback from educators and students expressing the need for more education about Sikhism.

I am very disappointed to see 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 living 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.

Yours sincerely,
Nirvair Singh