

From: Jagdeep Sahota
Sent: Tue 3/24, 2:30 PM
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 Jagdeep Sahota, and I have been a resident of California since 1988. I live in Mountain House, CA. and work as Sr. Director of Strategic Partnerships for Salesforce. I have 1 child who attends Wicklund Elementary school in Lammersville Unified school district in Grades 6th.

Having gone through middle school and high school in California in late 80s and early 90s, I have been called everything from "camel jockey" to "rag head". Back in those days, the population of Sikhs in California was low and the awareness was not there about Sikhism being a separate religion and our articles of faith. Today I ask my son every week if he is being bullied in school or teased on the field for wearing a turban. It is a constant concern for Sikh parents in California that the lack of Sikh awareness in curriculum can lead to our children being singled out, harassed or bullied on the school fields.

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.

Regards,
Jagdeep