

**From:** David Mandel

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 11, 2020 7:18 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; Superintendent; [email redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic studies

Dear friends:

It distresses me to hear that the latest draft of the ethnic studies program for California pupils seems to have succumbed to pressure from those who want to:

a) diminish the quantity and quality of sections on Arab Americans, among other things divorcing them from a central political issue that concerns and affects much of that community: the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel; system racism and discrimination against its Palestinian citizens; and denial of the human right of refugees expelled from their homeland to return.

and

b) impose a false redefinition of antisemitism that conflates it with criticism of Israeli policies, Zionism or the nature of the Israeli regime.

As an American Jew and a longtime previous resident (and citizen) of Israel, it's easy for me to see how this reflects a political agenda adopted by increasingly desperate defenders of the indefensible. Weaponizing false charges of antisemitism, especially in our schools, is not only wrong but also threatens the necessary fight against the increasing threat of racism generally, including against Jews, that has become a serious issue with the recent re-emergence of open and violent white supremacy. Please learn more about these phenomena and resist the pressure to turn an important area of study into a source of propaganda as you finalize the curriculum.

If I can be of any assistance in providing more information about this, please contact me. I recently wrote an amicus legal brief on behalf of 13 Jewish studies scholars on the subject of this tendentious redefinition of antisemitism and would be glad to share it with you.

Thank you for taking seriously this assault on history and academic freedom.

David L. Mandel, human rights attorney, Sacramento  
[phone numbers redacted]