

From: Mel Feradouni

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To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal statement

My name is Melina Feradouni, and I am a student in Los Angeles. I'm the child of Iranian Jewish immigrants. My parents experienced education that didn't give them a chance to learn about diverse cultures and communities in their country. They taught me about how that type of education fuels hate and biases that cause a rift among students.

My father shared stories with me of the physical abuse, verbal attacks, and discrimination he and his friends experienced because they were Jewish under an oppressive regime. While I want to thank you for making positive steps in the revised curriculum, there is still a long way to go. The "Guiding Values and Principles" in Chapter 1 of the ESMC are taken directly from a book called Education at War. The relevant section of the book essentially urges teachers to "develop solidarity and create linkages" with anti-Zionism, BDS, and anti-Israel narratives. I'm deeply concerned that these guiding values and principles will be used to justify promoting hateful agendas that harm students like me in the classroom.

I have sat in multiple classrooms where teachers have pushed their own political agenda, rather than giving us the facts, sharing multiple perspectives, and encouraging us to make up our own minds. As a student, I need you to speak up to ensure that this curriculum will actually promote critical thinking, instead of one-sided political ideologies.

If students were to be properly educated about different ethnicities, there could be less hate in this world. My parents and grandparents left their life in Iran as they knew it so that future generations would not have to experience religious intolerance. Sadly, I still experience bias and discrimination in CA, so I'm asking you to do your part to ensure that things will get better for my generation and future generations.