

**From:** Ora Yashar

**Sent:** Thursday, September 24, 2020 2:42 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] My Name is Ora Yashar

To the California Department of Education,

My name is Ora Yashar and I am a Los Angeles native. I am also an Iranian-American of Jewish descent.

For years, the CA education system has done a disservice to the great many minorities that make up the great state of CA by dismissing our various cultural experiences within the U.S. Educating children on our diverse histories, trials and tribulations is an impactful tool for cultivating empathy and creating a world we all feel seen in. But we cannot do so through hate. Ignoring anti-semitism in the curriculum, altogether, and in turn employing it, as a result of anti-Israel bias is absolutely horrific. Despite any feeling re: Israel, anti-semitism is a separate issue altogether and it effects ALL OF US.

I was extremely pleased when I heard there was an ethnic studies curriculum in the works. However, I was also extremely disappointed in the direction parts of this new curriculum was taking. Specifically, in regards to the tone deaf stance on anti-semitism. Additionally, there seems to be confusion that everyone from the Middle East defines themselves as Arab Americans. This is a falsehood. Iranians in general do not identify as Arab. And what of Iranian Jews such as myself? Do we not count? There is a Middle Eastern population that is being ignored within the Arab American portion of the curriculum.

Iranians hugely contribute to the economic prosperity of Los Angeles. And yet, you continue to misrepresent Iranians time and time again. Simultaneously, you are doing a huge service to Iranian Jews and the entire Jewish community. For the past year, there was a level of transparency and the curriculum seemed to be moving in a direction that was fair to all. However, in the past couple months the process has taken a turn and it feels as though the chaos around the pandemic has been abused in order to pass through new parts of this curriculum that were never agreed upon and employ anti-semitism.

I urgently seek several adjustments:

- Strike out anti-semitic rhetoric within the curriculum
- Provide an inclusive definition of Arab Americans
- Ensure the Holocaust is part of the curriculum, the death of 6 million Jews, and why such horrific atrocities should never again occur.

As a tax paying citizen of California I 100% stand against CA employing hate in an ethnic studies curriculum. If this happens it is a shameful day that will only incite hate and divisions for years to come.

DO THE RIGHT THING.

Sincerely,  
Ora Yashar

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Ora Yashar