

From: Shana Nelson Middler
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2019 2:47 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Tony; Tony Thurmond; JIAC
Subject: Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

Last week, the head Rabbi at my synagogue sent an email expressing concern about a proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that excludes the American Jewish experience as an example of self-identification, despite Jews making up three percent of California's population. The following day I read the LA Times Opinion letter which also warned about this draft lesson plan. So I decided to read the document myself. I made it through about 10 pages before initially giving up and immediately knew that this biased, impractical, inflammatory and unbalanced document would surely never see the light of day. However, these are strange times so after my best attempt to finish reading it, I am writing to state how opposed I am to this curriculum plan.

This over 61,000-word document mentions the word "Jew" exactly three times. The word "Israel" shows up seven times, usually with a negative connotation or equated with Palestine. Nowhere in this document is mention of the historic, dramatic and nation-changing contributions of Jewish immigrants to the story of this country, and the State of California. As a community, Jews have always been at the forefront of scientific discovery, arts and literature, human rights defense and social change. This document totally erases the Jewish people from the American multi-cultural experience, dangerously echoing the goals of the Nazis during the years leading up to and during the Holocaust. It promotes anti-Semitic views, and false and misleading claims about Israel's right to exist. If accepted as written, then California public schools will be educating a generation of students to exclude Jews from the communities where we increasingly struggle to live without outright threats to our safety.

I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, but urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

Thank you,

Shana Nelson Middler
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