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Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 12:08 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Inclusion of Korean American Experiences in Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

September 23, 2020

Dear California Department of Education,

It's exciting to see many positive directions the field of education is headed despite the unprecedented situation of COVID-19. Having *AB 1460* passed requiring all newly entering CSU freshmen to take an ethnic studies course as a graduation requirement and *AB 330* for the same with high school students show that our education system is headed towards just and inclusive education. Seeing the *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* (ESMC) moving forward is optimistic; However, I am concerned that rich history of Korean Americans experiences and their contributions to our diverse society was excluded and only "Koreatown" and "K-pop" are mentioned as one of the additional sample topics.

As a trainer of pre-service and in-service teachers, I am reminded daily the lack of teaching resources that are available to provide just, equity and inclusive education. In particular, materials that highlights contributions of many racial minority groups are very scarce. Even though there were many Korean American heroes including Dr. Sammy Lee (Olympic medalist and a medical doctor who served in the U.S. Army hospital) and Colonel Young Oak Kim (U.S. Army officer, first Asian American to lead a combat battalion) who helped form this country, none of these stories are told to our K-12 grade students.

It's important to address contributions of Korean Americans especially in Southern California where a large number of Korean Americans reside and many great Korean American heroes lived. Korean Americans make up a large part of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. To exclude the Korean American community in the ESMC would be to dismiss a large part of California's history and experiences of "people of color".

It is a perfect time for all of us (teachers, students. Community) to learn what other ethnic groups have contributed, beyond what textbooks state. It is important to go to a deeper level, train us to examine history looking at an incident/event from multiple lenses, including the voices from powerless and underserved people. Being able to use critical lenses and develop skills to critically analyze race and social related issues to foster critical thinking skills in understanding other communities, culture and heritage will be a great training for all of us, so we can be open-minded in communication, widen our perspective and see how history can be interpreted differently. It would be advantages to learn about our diverse AAPI communities, including Korean American studies, as part of Asian American studies. Acknowledging AAPI cultural, family and heritage practices will encourage K-12 students to learn how different groups have struggled and worked together to build our nation and state.

In order to do so, it's important to have a well-balanced curriculum that represents contributions of diverse groups, including Korean Americans. I strongly recommend lessons on Korean American experiences to be included in the *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum*. In addition, include important resources such as [Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles](#) (KCCLA) and [Young Oak Kim Center](#) (YOK Center) with the rest of Asian American resources (*Appendix 3*), so that they are available to all K-12 educators and students in California.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

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