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August 14, 2019

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond  
President, State Board of Education  
1430 N Street, Room 5111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Dr. Darling-Hammond:

As a child I was taught and fully embraced the metaphor of America as the great melting pot – that the strength and moral authority of this country arose from its embrace of all peoples and all cultures, valuing each for its contribution to the whole. Now, as a 72-year-old man, I still hold this concept dear, and as such I fully support the inclusion of ethnic studies as part of a high school curriculum. We benefit from learning about one another, about our traditions, history, strengths and fears. It would be my hope that such a course of study would strengthen us as a nation and allow us to strive as one to perfect the ideals put forth by our founding fathers.

That being said, now that I have read the proposed California Ethnic Studies Curriculum, I believe that this curriculum sadly does not address the mission set forth above. Instead of goals, American ideals are presented as weak strawmen to be derided. Children (and high school students are indeed children) are instead to be taught that they are victims, and should unite in their victimhood.

It is easy to accept to accept victimhood. I doubt there is any ethnic group that cannot view itself through that lens, both in this land and as refugees/asylum-seekers fleeing other lands. And I fully understand and support efforts to right the institutional and societal wrongs that exist in America today. But, in my opinion, identifying as victims rather than as Americans seeking to create a more perfect union is both self-destructive and self-defeating. It only creates a foil for the most deplorable groups among us.

I would therefore strongly recommend that a high school ethnics studies requirement not be approved until such time as a curriculum based on American values has been developed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fredrick L. Roder".

Fredrick L. Roder