

**From:** Doris Bittar

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 2:56 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Criminalizing Arab American First Amendment Rights

Dear Tony Thurmond, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Ethnic Studies:

Do not further erode Arab American rights on how we speak, how we define ourselves, and how we contribute to discussions on our future aspirations for discussion about peace.

The "guardrails" the ADL and others have called for are code words aimed to criminalize our First Amendment rights. Factual criticism of Israeli human rights violations will be deemed anti-Semitic if you adapt these so called "guardrails."

Who deputized the ADL and other extreme groups to police American free speech? They aim to define Arab Americans, criminalize our rights to educate others, and share innovative ideas on how peace may be achieved. If you adopt these arguments, any constructive solutions will become illegal and not discussable in any form. You are on a slippery slope.

No one can define who Arab Americans are, but Arab Americans. Note that those who attempt to define us are from extremist segments of Jewish and White supremacists communities. **They actively create disinformation, mistranslations and outright fabrications against Arab Americans to silence us.**

The IHRA guidelines limit and call for policing of our language. These are bigoted and paranoid aims to halt criticism against Israel, limit the rights of all Americans, and keep the world and especially the US in a state of perpetual war. Arab American voices are constructive and will create paths for peace and justice. We release ourselves from these bondages and are actively visible in this effort.

It is now time for Ethnic Studies and this governing body to release itself from bending to facism.

Best,

Doris Bittar

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