

From: Karen Gough
Sent: Saturday, August 3, 2019 2:35 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Intense Concerns about the Proposed Curriculum

To the Advisory Committee,

I have intense concerns about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I have no problem with teaching ethnic studies in the US as long as there is not a political agenda attached to it. The proposed curriculum clearly has a far left agenda where anyone who is not a cis-gender white male is presented as a victim - both historically and in the present.

The curriculum's main theme seems to be who in America has power and who doesn't. For instance, Capitalism is associated with white supremacy and power over other ethnicities, women and the LGBTQ community.

"4. critique empire and its relationship to **white supremacy**, racism, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, **capitalism**, ableism, anthropocentrism, and **other forms of power and oppression** at the intersections of our society;

Yet our country was founded on capitalism and the free market and is the most prosperous country in the world today. During the Gilded Age of the late 1800s, Capitalism was abused by those in power but the infrastructure of our country grew by leaps and bounds and people of ALL COLOR, as well as recent immigrants, benefited by our thriving economy. But people's rights were abused and our society rose up in protest. During the Progressive Era under President Theodore Roosevelt, government regulations and safety rules were implemented to correct the abuse of power. This is important history that should be taught but without the agenda of stating that capitalism is a form of power and oppression. This is simply not true. People in power, no matter the economic system, can abuse those who are not - unless there are checks and balances. If the US was completely socialist there would still be people in power who abuse. The curriculum implies that capitalism is a system for white people that only benefits other white people. You are ignoring all the people of color, etc, who are capitalists themselves! In fact, unless they are working for the government or being paid by tax-payers (who are capitalists), everyone in this country is a capitalist! Here is the definition of Capitalism: an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.

I also don't like how the curriculum suggests studying certain people who are known to be anti-Semitic and are associated with anti-Israel rhetoric. Talk about pushing a far-left agenda!! I would write more about this but the Jewish ETHNIC community is already writing much to protest your curriculum and I don't need to add more.

Another problem I have is with the agenda behind the "opportunity gap" that "contributed to disproportionate student success across racial and class lines." I agree that where you are born, the culture you are part of and the people who raise you can make or break a child. But if you are going to discuss this, it should not be limited to economic disparities and racial lines. Are you willing to talk about the difference in cultures? I know you will protest at these generalizations but there is truth to them: Asians in general value education and hard work and no matter which neighborhood they are in or how poor they are, they help and encourage their children to study hard and respect their parents. Look at the Vietnamese who fled their country during the 1970s and came to the US. Those adults worked hard -

learning English, working multiple jobs - doing everything they could to lift themselves up and take advantage of the opportunities our country has to offer. Are you going to talk about that and use it as a positive example? Are you going to talk about how cultures who value being an active part of their children's lives and supporting them in their studies are the cultures who thrive? If you don't want to talk about cultures you could turn the conversation to families. Children raised in a close-knit family with parent(s) who are engaged with their children generally succeed. Parents who abandon their children scar them for life. And guess what - government intervention and regulation will not help counteract this fact.

Portraying races as endless victims where the government needs to intervene or even pay reparations, does not help anyone. I will quote Joseph Epstein in his August 3, 2019 opinion article, "What Would We Do Without the Word 'Racism'?"

"... the real racists in this country are those who insist blacks are permanent victims and always will be so in what they claim is an irretrievably, hopelessly racist America."

This proposed ethnic studies curriculum portrays all ethnicities except straight white males and Jews as eternal victims who must fight back against a systematic racist regime. It does not show the progress that has been made in this country, nor does it favorably compare our country to most of the rest of the world where people have NO RIGHTS and NO FREEDOM. And it does not talk about the incredible opportunities available to all Americans who are willing to pursue them with help from their family, school and community (and dare I suggest - church?). I will be fully supportive of Ethnic Studies if the curriculum is changed to an unbiased area of study without a politicized agenda.

Sincerely,
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