

**From:** Harminder Singh  
**Sent:** Friday 3/27, 11:58 AM  
**Subject:** Sikh inclusion in CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee,

I am writing today to request the meaningful inclusion of Sikhism in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for entry into the public record.

I have been a resident of California since 2010, when I joined Stanford University Department of Neurological Surgery as an attending physician. Currently, I am also the Chief of Neurosurgery at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, which is the county hospital system for the bay area. It is my privilege to be able to serve the bay area community.

Having attended high school and college in the US, I know first hand of the damage that misinformation, bias and bullying can cause on the morale of Sikh Students. As a community, we are often the target of xenophobia that stems from misrepresentation, misinformation, and mistaken identity. Post 9-11, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a family friend, was shot dead in Arizona. My own uncle, a turbaned Sikh, was shot in the stomach while returning home from work, while a group of men yelled at him to "go back home." Thankfully, after several surgeries, he survived.

I am extremely disappointed that the Sikh community, which has been an integral part of California's history and economy since the early 1900s, is not represented in a meaningful way in the initial Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft.

There are approximately 250,000 Sikhs in California. A report by the Sikh Coalition found that turbaned Sikhs are bullied at a rate double the national average. I wish to reiterate that the inclusion of Sikhism, the world's fifth largest religion, in the model curriculum in a meaningful way, is an essential step in overcoming ignorance and in reducing bullying and harassment.

Specifically, I request:

1. A detailed lesson plan about the Sikh American community to be inserted into the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.
2. More specific examples throughout the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that focus on the myriad of *positive* Sikh contributions made over 125 years in California, to balance the current language's focus on the hateful backlash against Sikhs in the context of post-9/11 Islamophobia.

Both my children are currently in Pre K and first grade. It is my hope that they will not only feel included when they see themselves accurately represented in their school curriculum, but also feel proud of the many contributions of Sikhs to the social fabric of California over the last century.

The Sikh Coalition and the Jakara Movement will be in communication with you soon, specifying the details of these requests. I ask that the recommendations made in their forthcoming letter be incorporated into the final Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum on my behalf.

Yours sincerely,

Harman

**Harminder Singh, MD. FACS. FAANS.**

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