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To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: ESMC Curriculum draft comments

Among the California Department of Education's General Principles for the ESMC are that it "include accurate information based on current and confirmed research," and "Encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equality, justice, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, etc." A great example of how different groups have struggled and worked together is the way in which the Jewish community supported the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Many Jewish people lost their lives in the struggle for civil rights. The partnership between the Jewish-American and the African-American communities during the 1960's could be a great way to highlight disparate communities struggling and working together. The proposed curriculum provides an example of a restrictive covenant that prohibits the sale of homes in certain areas to various ethnic groups. It is not mentioned in the proposed curriculum, but one of those ethnic groups was Jewish people. By excluding Jewish Americans as an ethnic group from, and including anti-Semitic and anti-Israel language in, the proposed curriculum, the proposed draft of the ESMC fails to comply with the California Department of Education's General Principles.

I urge the people drafting the proposed ESMC curriculum to work with knowledgeable members of the Jewish community to properly include a discussion of Jewish-American culture in the ESMC curriculum and to delete from that curriculum any language that is perceived by many as anti-Semitic or anti-Israel. A good place to start would be to work with an organization such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) on the next draft of the ESMC curriculum. The ADL is committed to fighting hate and fostering better understanding among disparate groups. Not changing the proposed ESMC to delete from that curriculum any language that is perceived by many as anti-Semitic or anti-Israel, and to properly include a discussion of the Jewish-American culture, would result in Jewish students feeling threatened and may be perceived as giving permission to others to attack the Jewish community. That result would be the exact opposite of what was intended by the California legislature in adopting AB 20

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