

From: Marjorie Barnett
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 9:04 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

I oppose the portion of the proposed curriculum discussing the Jewish people.

Jews, in the United States and elsewhere, have not created, nor recognized, a division between white and non-white Jews as the proposal suggests. There are Jewish individuals of all races and ethnicities and all of them are part of the Jewish people. The Jewish people share a history that includes both achievement and discrimination, both of which have affected Jews of all backgrounds and physical appearances.

Some of the concepts discussed in the curriculum create unfair distinctions and divisiveness, and actually foster the type of negative stereotypes too often ascribed to Jews. We have a tradition of celebrating diversity, whether in our own religion, or that of others. It is inherent in our religion, which speaks to social justice.

Personally, I grew up in Detroit, during the era when North African Jews were forced to flee from Arab countries, for no reason except their Judaism. Our family, as well as the entire Detroit Jewish community, was very happy to help Jews who were forced to flee Egypt, with no property or money. I remember a family of four arriving late at night, at our house in Detroit, with fear of the unknown, speaking only Arabic, and our family welcoming them, with a place to stay, and love for our fellow Jews.

I have lived in many parts of the US, including Washington, DC, Maryland, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Florida, and California, for my education, training, and practice of Pediatrics. As a physician, I have seen patients of all races and backgrounds, giving the same treatment to everyone. In the communities where I lived, studied, and worked, I have always had an affiliation with other Jews, either as patients, as a congregant, or as a supporter of my religion.

I can honestly say that Jews all over celebrate diversity, and I have never seen prejudice within the Jewish community against Jews of any background. I have, however, seen prejudice and persecution against Jews of all backgrounds. Lighter skinned Jews, as referenced in the proposed California curriculum, do not have superior "privilege". We are still persecuted and murdered, as in Pittsburgh, Poway, or Poland, regardless of the hue of our skin.

Trying to make a false dichotomy in a public school curriculum is simply wrong. This type of stereotyping is unhelpful in any setting but especially must be avoided in a mandatory K-12 curriculum.

Jews are a very small minority group, with a history of severe persecution, up to this very day. We have struggled, learned and survived against all odds.

It is beholden upon the State of California to represent us with an accurate depiction. This proposed curriculum does not achieve this, in fact, quite the opposite has occurred.

I would be happy, as a San Diego resident, to offer my skills in changing this project into a more acceptable and accurate presentation of Jewish life.

Sincerely,
Marjorie Barnett, M.D., MBA