

From: Tom Wheys

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2020 5:20 PM

To: Shanine Coats

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Arab Americans cannot be excluded from Ethnic Studies.

Dear Instructional Quality Commission Shanine Coats,

We can teach kids to embrace people of a difference culture, their lives and histories as an opportunity to learn about the fascinating array of people on our one planet, to learn from them and be able to accept and appreciate new and different ways, instead of fearing them. The fear and hatred of "the other" only leads to a very limited, self-centered view of our--everyone's--world, mistrust, racism, jingoism and more wars. Arab cultures are far older than our own; don't you admit that they obviously have much to teach and enrich us?

I'm a constituent of yours and deeply concerned with reports that Arab American Studies may be cut from California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), under the false premise of it not being within the four racialized groups of Ethnic Studies.

The field's leaders of color, including the Association of Asian American Studies, Asian American Studies Department Chairs, and the Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition—are insisting Arab American Studies belongs in the curriculum, and that it remain.

As is evident in the spirit of AB2016 legislation, the California Department of Education must respect communities of color, and have deference to Ethnic Studies professors and practitioners of color for this project.

Efforts to undermine or water-down any critical components of the draft, and of Ethnic Studies as a field must be rejected.

I know you are well-aware of the targeted attacks on Arabs and Muslims by the Trump administration, and the demonization of the struggle of migrants and people of color throughout the United States. As a sanctuary state, California should continue to be a counterweight against that trend—not serve as a stamp of approval.

Sincerely,
Tom Wheys
Pioneer, CA
United States