

From: Jack Forman

Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 12:03 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Thank you for inviting comment from California taxpayers regarding the proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum.

I am heartened by the improvements you made in the revisions of the initial curriculum draft you released in the spring. But I was very disappointed that you did not follow through on your promise to be fully transparent. On August 12, without allowing public comment, you added an unspecified lesson plan on Arab Americans within the Asian-American curriculum which included a discarded antisemitic and anti-Israel bias from a draft lesson plan on Arab Americans made in 2019. I urge you to remove this segment of the curriculum.

And, I also encourage you to include a lesson plan on Jewish Americans, which defines antisemitism clearly and comprehensively as a form of bigotry. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism, which in 2010 was adopted by the U.S. State Department during President Obama's presidency, would be a good model to follow. This lesson plan should also discuss the many challenges American Jews have had to overcome in fighting against antisemitism and the many different sources of this hate.

The lesson plan on Jewish Americans should recognize the broad diversity of the American Jewish Community and therefore should include Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Mizrahi Jews -- as well as Jews of color.

I also suggest that any approved lesson plan on Arab Americans should include material on Jewish Americans of Middle Eastern and North African descent. (MENA)

Finally, I urge you to keep politically loaded terms and ideology out of the curriculum, so that American children and teens can appreciate the rich contributions of the many cultures that have made America the great country it is.

The Ethnic Studies Curriculum should be an educational resource, not a propagandistic tool of politics which glorifies one culture by demonizing another.

Jack Forman