

From: Gina Preziosi

Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2021 2:40 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Appendix A of Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

To Whom It May Concern:

I am forwarding this message on behalf of friends in the Jewish community in your state. Their scope on this issue needs to be recognized and applied.

"I am writing to express great concern with the latest draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Specifically Appendix A: Lesson Plans and Topics on Jewish Peoples.

I find the outline to be very problematic with language that is antisemitic. The usage of the word "privilege" is not applicable in any context. The outline on "Conditional Whiteness" suggests all Jews happily hide their ethnicity to be white. This is problematic for many reasons. Firstly, it does not include Jews of color, such as Sephardic Jews, Mizrahi Jews or others, while making the assumption that all Jews are white-passing/ white-functioning. Secondly, Orthodox Jews are visibly Jewish. While many are white-passing we certainly do not have the same privilege and face other discriminations. We also do not happily choose to assimilate. Using the language "racial privilege" is not applied to any other ethnic group and supports the white supremacy ideals of the "Model Minority" myth.

The fact sheet on Jewish American Diversity should be reviewed by a Jewish Organization such as The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). They have included a definition of the Jewish peoples that does not explain that Jewish People can be ethnically Jewish and secular. While a Jewish person can also be non-ethnically Jewish and practice Judaism, but both are equally Jewish. Judaism is an ethno-religion and a tribe not a race as described by the United States Census.

The claim that American attitudes changed towards Jewish peoples after the Holocaust implies that American antisemitism ended with the liberation of the camps in Europe. In reality this is a false narrative that does not include the Laws and policies placed on the Jewish people in American from 1920-1980. Notably Immigration and Refugee Laws of 1920-1970, Employment Restrictions, College Admission Quotas ,Banishment from Private and Publically Funded Clubs, and even Jim Crow Laws that applied to Jews and how they influenced the Nazi party. Holocaust Education only required learning in 15 states.

History on Leo Frank should also be included in the section regarding violence and terrorism. The current text only addresses Synagogue shooting. While currently there have been street stabbings, personal attacks ,and Jewish businesses vandalized. It should be noted that Jews are 2% of the US population and make up for 60% of hate crimes according to latest stats from the FBI.

We are very pleased to be included in the curriculum and want the opportunity to get this right. Please consider having a Jewish Organization help make changes to ensure that the only definitions of Jews are written by Jews in the interest of fundamental fairness. Thank you for your consideration of our views and your interests in this issue of great significance to California and the Jewish community."

Thank you,

Gina Aspaas