

From: Shirley Ann Lee
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 12:24 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Curriculum

I would appreciate it if you could discuss this issue with Senator Beall. Time is of the essence.

I am very concerned about the proposed mandatory "ethnic studies curriculum," even as revised. A troubling example from the revised curriculum is in Appendix B. There is a proposed lesson plan related to "housing discrimination." And yet **there is no mention of the restrictive covenants that existed all across America that denied Jews the right to purchase property in designated neighborhoods.** As this lesson plan is currently drafted, students will (mistakenly) believe that only people of color ever suffered illegal housing discrimination. With the shocking rise of anti-Semitism in California, the US and the world, why on earth would you want to ignore this valuable shared legacy?

I believe that the "proposed lesson plan" to "develop a lesson on the Arab American Experience" was "recommended" by Dr. Thurmond at the last minute to appease those who originally tried to include hateful, biased, rhetoric in the original curriculum, including propaganda about Israel, Jews, and the Palestinian cause. See: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr20/yr20rel68.asp>.

[Recommendations Proposed for Ethnic Studies - Year 2020 \(CA Dept of Education\)](https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr20/yr20rel68.asp)

www.cde.ca.gov

State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Civil Rights Leaders
Propose Recommendations for Ethnic Studies Model
Curriculum.

In a somewhat obvious attempt to "bury the lead," this last-minute recommendation was included with another recommendation to develop a lesson plan on the "Pacific Islander" experience and to claim that both qualify under the traditional "Asian" ethnic studies discipline, but that is wrong. Not all "Arabs" are "Asian." Just ask any "Arab" from North Africa. Not to mention the fact that some "Arabs" are "Jews." (JIMENA is an organization devoted to the cause of Jews displaced from various African countries, but there are no "proposed lesson plans" about them at the moment.) In addition, many other "ethnic" groups are excluded. Why?

Are you aware that one of the members of the original curriculum drafting committee (Shamia Shoman) (@shamiashoman) recently tweeted out a link to the "Muslim Grassroots Movement" which warned that the CDE was "bowing to the desires of a right-wing

campaign?" See: https://act.newmode.net/action/mpower-change/take-action-save-ethnic-studies?sp_ref=663686518.392.203165.t.0.2. I do not know why this is being ignored. I am not "right wing" and I detest the narrative that says anyone who supports Israel and/or is a Zionist is "right wing" or "racist."

I think that somehow the BDS narrative has been implicitly adopted in the revised curriculum even as amended. Therefore there still is an improper assumption that high school students should NOT be taught about Jews and the Jewish American experience because "Jewish" is "religious" and not "ethnic," whereas teaching the "Arab American" experience is "OK" because "Arab" is "ethnic" and "not religious."

This same narrative wrongly promotes the idea that all Jews are "white," which is how they "colonized" Palestine, whereas Arabs are "people of color." This same false narrative further allows those who repeat it, in order to de-legitimize Israel and Zionism, by saying that "anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitic." This is anti-Semitic, anti-Israel propaganda that has no business in a high school classroom and you are in danger of making a curriculum based on this hateful rhetoric a model for the entire country.

I am 100% Jewish; my Jewish roots go back at least as far as my great, great, great grandparents on both sides. However, according to my DNA, **50.8% of my "genetic ancestors" are "Western Asian and North African," (including 14.2% "Arab, Egyptian and Levantine")** and 46.2% of my "genetic ancestors" are "Southern European." Yet, **as a "Jew," the drafters of the proposed curriculum say that I am "white" and not a "person of color."** This is misguided, unfair, and imho, racist and anti-Semitic.

Anti-semitism is on the rise in the US and abroad, even in California. See: <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/smell-the-anti-semitism-america>

High school students are capable of acting and promoting virulent, anti-Jewish hatred. See: <https://www.jweekly.com/2020/09/04/school-officials-identify-marin-student-behind-antisemitic-instagram-accounts/>

Sadly, Zionism and support for Israel caused a wonderful young lady to resign from her position as student body president at USC. Her "crime?" Support of Israel and her "open" Zionism: <https://www.jweekly.com/2020/08/11/s-f-native-resigns-from-usc-student-government-over-israel-views/>

There is only one way to foster greater understanding and to prevent such hateful behaviors: **Education.** Help teachers promote understanding, not hateful and one-sided political rhetoric.

Please urge the Senator to ask the IQC to pledge to the following:

1. A sample lesson on Jewish Americans in Appendix B.
2. Addition of a lesson on Middle Eastern American Jews under the Asian American category in Appendix B.

3. Addition of a lesson on Middle Eastern Americans including Jews, Arabs, Iranians, and other large California ethnic communities under the Asian American category in Appendix B.

Thank you
Shirley Lee, San Jose