

From: Justin Doi

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 3:11 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Asian American Ethnic Studies - Public Comment

Dear Tony Thurmond,

Hello,

My name is Justin Doi. I am a Japanese-Chinese American. If you have the time, I would like to present my concerns for the new Asian American studies curriculum. You have probably recently received many emails bringing up their concerns that certain minority groups seem to be absent in said curriculum. This is not where my concerns lie. My concern is that if these groups are added to the curriculum, that they will be added last minute in a rushed effort to please the "squeaky wheel" and be presented in a negative light.

I was a high schooler only 3 years ago, so I know how horrible high school students can be. I was lucky enough to have a good history teacher in my senior year who taught us about things like Japanese internment, Chinese exclusion, Korean human trafficking, and other topics that most history classes seem to skip.

This is when the bullying began. When we learned about Japanese internment, every Japanese kid became a "enemy alien". When we learned about Chinese exclusion, every Chinese kid became an "illegal alien". When we learned about Korea... well you get the idea. If this is what high schoolers take away from a good high school teacher, what would they have taken away from a bad teacher or textbook?

Since middle school when I saw my history textbook depict American Indians being given many horses and wagons during the "Trail of Tears" (they were not), I've had little faith in the textbook/school curriculum industry to depict history with nuanced accuracy, let alone the histories of immigrants from over a dozen Asian countries.

So in short, what are the problems? The inclusion of Filipinx farmworkers, Chinese Railroad workers, Pacific Islanders, and Hmong Americans is great and I wish I learned more about these groups when I was in high school, but including Vietnamese, Japanese, and Koreans into the curriculum I am afraid it will either water down the lesson plan or make it so dense as to create loathing from both teachers and students alike. I am also concerned that low quality inclusion only for the sake of inclusion and not because the industry truly believes the stories of these groups need to be taught may lead students to gain misinformation, negative bias, animosity, and a cause for bullying.

Keep in mind, however, I am not an expert in this subject. I cannot come up with a perfect solution that would ease my worrying and keep everyone happy. Maybe having authorities on cultural studies have another look through the material to see what can be improved in the curriculum before publishing it. This is not a flat "no" to the inclusion of Japanese, Vietnamese, and Koreans in the school curriculum, but I want the stories to be told correctly or not at all. I also believe that younger children should have a higher focus on emotional studies if possible. Teaching history is

good as it will prevent us from repeating it, but I think creating students with strong, positive virtues can help this as well.

Sincerely,
Justin Doi