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Dear California Department of Education and State Board of Education,

Thank you for serving our students. I write to you today as an associate professor in Chicana/o Studies Department of Chicana/o Studies at the University of California at Davis to express my very strong support of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum. Without doubt, Ethnic studies courses will allow all students to cultivate critical thinking and problem solving, civic and cultural awareness, collaboration, adaptability, and resilience through a curriculum that is centered on the perspectives of historically marginalized groups.

As research studies show, the pedagogy embodied in Ethnic Studies is: culturally responsive teaching, designed to give all students an introduction to the experiences of racial and ethnic communities and give pathways to students to break from cycles of poverty, violence, and incarceration as students learn that their experiences are connected to systems of oppression and inequity. Researchers agree that the academic and social impact of Ethnic Studies on students is important and significant. According to the National Education Association, students taking Ethnic Studies courses connect with their lived experience, their engagement at school increases, as do their literacy skills, as well as their achievement and attitudes toward learning¹. Similarly, according to a Stanford study², high school students at risk of dropping out that took a course examining the roles of race, nationality and culture on identity and experience all improved their academic performance and attendance.

Also, I am deeply concerned by some of the false accusations by more than twenty California Jewish organizations that the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is “inaccurate and misleading in several critical respects and is drafted in a manner that reflects an anti-Jewish bias.”³ One of these organizations included the Anti-Defamation League or ADL, which broke sharply with the civil rights movement in 1967, when the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) recognized Palestinians as a colonized people⁴. More recently, the ADL facilitates exchanges of racialized, repressive practices

¹ <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf>

² <http://inid.gse.uci.edu/files/2011/03/DeePenner2016AERJThe-causaleffectsofculturalrelevance.pdf>

³ <https://www.jweekly.com/2019/08/06/jewish-orgs-alarmed-by-draft-ethnic-studies-curriculum-for-california-high-schools/>

⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg (2006) *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century*

between the United States of America and Israeli police⁵. The ADL has attacked Black Lives Matter for drawing connections between militarized, racist policing in the United States of America and Israel/Palestine⁶. The ADL has been a vocal supporter of the shooting of unarmed protest marchers in Gaza, and of Trump's inflammatory Jerusalem embassy move⁷. Given their actions and principles, I call for members of the California Department of Education and State Board of Education to accept the Model Curriculum as is or with minor changes.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call me at 530-220-5582 or email me: ndeebsossa@ucdavis.edu.

Sincerely,

Natalia Deeb-Sossa

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⁵ The Intercept (9/15/17) "[Israel security forces are training American cops despite history of rights abuses](#)", Teen Vogue (7/25/18) "[How Policing in the U.S. and Security in Israel Are Connected](#)", and [DeadlyExchange.org](#)

⁶ ADL.org (8/5/16) "[Eyes on The Prize: In Pursuit of Racial Justice, Stick to the Facts and Avoid the Fiction](#)" and

The Nation (9/17/16) "[American Jews Should Support the Movement for Black Lives Platform](#)"

⁷ ADL.org (12/6/17) "[ADL Welcomes President Trump's Announcement on Jerusalem](#)" and https://twitter.com/ADL_National/status/979767178760282113