

From: Rachel Modena Barasch

Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 12:38 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies

Dear IQC Commissioners,

I am writing to you with a very personal story. My father was born in Israel on Kibbutz Merhavia, located to the east of Afula, in 1935. My father's closest friends were Israeli Arabs and those who now call themselves, Palestinians. My father actually considers himself Palestinian since this is what Israel was called pre-1945.

My family history is complicated -much like many of those who fled from country to country to escape persecution, anti-semitism, hatred and bigotry.

I urge the commission to include antisemitism and Middle Eastern Jewish Americans as part of the lesson in the Model Curriculum. One cannot ignore the vibrant Jewish people who lived in Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Iraq, Iran, Spain, Italy (where my ancestry is from due to the Inquisition).

California's State Board of Education's rules require the state's curricula to portray peoples proportionately and not discriminate in favor of or against nationalities, races, ethnicities and religions. Therefore Middle Eastern Jewish Americans and Arab Americans should be treated equally and placed in the curriculum's Asian American Section. Include the Middle Eastern American lesson in full so that full histories won't be overlooked. Don't just post a link to a web page.

Antisemitism must be discussed and put into the context of the displacement of millions of Middle Eastern Jews from countries like Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Ethiopia, Syria, etc.

Antisemitism continues to be the third most prevalent ethnic-based and most prevalent religious-based hate crime in California according to government statistics, up a disturbing 72% since 2016. As Superintendent Thurmond recently stated, "as we talk about the rise of white supremacy, we must talk about the increase in hate acts and bigotry against the Jewish Community, the high level of anti-Semitism that we see."

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Rachel Modena Barasch