

From:

Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 9:06 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Making Ethnic Studies Inclusive!

Dear Ethnic Studies Team, Assemblymember Ting, and Amy and Angela from Senator Scott Wiener's office,

I write because as a San Francisco resident, as an American Citizen and as a human being living according to my Jewish values, I'm deeply concerned that the currently proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum leaves out many ethnic communities that are important to the great state of California.

In particular, it seems that Mizrahi Jews, Iranians, Kurds, Assyrian Christians, Coptic Christians, Yazidis, Bahais, and Zoroastrians are lumped together as "other middle easterners." Lumping diverse groups together into a monolithic collective does a disservice to the objective of having a truly inclusive ethnic studies curriculum.

Similarly, comparing the Jewish experience in America to the Irish experience in America, ignores the experience of Jews of Color, and ignores the fact that anti-Semitic persecution of Jews of all colors persists to this day.

While I'm grateful that revisions have been made that removed language that could very well have been considered anti-Semitic, I don't think that this new version has come far enough. That the original authors of the Curriculum were able to put something together that might have perpetuated anti-Semitism is a clear demonstration of the need for a deeper understanding of the diversity of the Jewish experience in America. I feel, therefore, it's a moral imperative for the body charged with revising the Curriculum, not to simply take out a few harmful references, but to create a curriculum that is truly inclusive.

I'm recently married, and currently plan to raise my future children in the Bay Area. I hope that when I do, they are able to learn from an Ethnic Studies curriculum that accurately reflects their heritage and the community around them.

I am counting on all of you to help make that happen!

Sincerely

Justin Hefter