

From: Henry Mourad
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 1:00 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Tony Thurmond
Subject: Response to the Quality Commission of the Board of Education

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am quite concerned by the proposed and unbalanced Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. While I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, I cannot in good conscience accept it as it is presently drafted. I urge you to reconsider the contents and make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

I came to California as a Jewish refugee from Egypt 54 years ago after enduring persecution and humiliation in my native land. Our wealth was confiscated, our business that was our only viable means of financial support was sequestered, and to do us irreparable harm, we were stripped of our nationality and kicked out of the country penniless. Yet, we arrived and comfortably assimilated among the people of this great State. People rallied around us because of what we endured and not because we were Jewish.

Having said that, I want to emphasize that in the past, ethnic studies included people of color and Native Americans. This current proposed curriculum has been expanded to include Muslims. My greatest fear is the study of Muslims included Boycott, Divestment, and sanctions of movement for Palestine. This resulted in the deplorable fact of painting all Jews with a single brush. As an American Jew, I am sensitive to the pain and the plight of the

Palestinians. Yet, I'm also deeply aware that Palestinians are not just Muslims and includes Christians as well. Furthermore, contrary to your objectives, the unbalanced proposed curriculum excluded Jews from ethnic groups, anti-Semitism, religious hate crimes, as well as disturbing ideas about the reputation of Jews being in control of the financial system and the media.

Please, I implore you to leave politics aside while we concentrate on diversity and inclusion. Let's learn from Germany and their curriculum of education about the Holocaust and its ramifications. The program teaches about tolerance and what lessons learned from the atrocities of persecution, oppression and discrimination. No references are made to the plight of the Jews and that six million perished as a result. I beg you to be careful in including religious oppression, be it Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist etc...for religion is sacred to each their own. To present a coursework that is one sided may result in irreparable harm, insight hatred and build anger, contrary to your noble objectives.

Because of my previous experience in my native land, I'm very sensitive to the idea of eliminating any potential one sided, hateful and unbalanced program with an ulterior motive. Please, I urge you not to give in to hidden agendas from political groups, disguised under a shared understanding curriculum for education. It would be a cruel irony to marginalize Jewish students with a program meant to help alleviate prejudice and bigotry.

Once again, I simply ask you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns. I have faith in the California Board of Education to make the proper changes.

Thank you,

Henry Mourad