

From: Dori Ben-David

Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:58 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Andy Johnston

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concern about CA's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) - 2nd draft

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

I just learned about the 2nd draft of CA's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) and while I am proud of California for leading the way in taking a more progressive approach to our Ethnic Studies program, I am terrified about the way that the narrative around the Israeli-Arab conflict has been distorted. The history and the competing narratives are so long and complicated and fraught with competing agendas and in recent years, I have watched a very important part of the narrative (that of my family, in fact) become twisted and misrepresented and in part, completely eliminated. It makes me so sad but it also scares me tremendously. Just a couple of examples of the concerns I have:

- Referering to BDS - which in my view us a hateful anti-Israel organization - as an "advocacy group"
- Little mention of the huge population of Mizrahi Jews and other Jews of color (like my family who escaped persecution in Iran to seek refuge in the Palestinian Mandate)

It feels as if a one-sided political ideology is represented, which I know is not the intent of the curriculum designers. I have many more concerns on this topic but I assume this is enough to explain my position.

I live in Redwood City, CA and my husband and I have three children - one in high school, one in middle school and one in elementary school.

Thank you for your review of this matter.

Dori Ben-David Johnston

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