

From: Ruby Goodall  
Sent: Friday, November 13, 2020 8:00 PM  
To: Ethnic Studies; Superintendent;  
Cc: [redacted emails]  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum comment

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to hear from me.

I am a public school social science teacher in California and a Jewish-American, whose grandparents were forced to flee Germany by the Nazis. So I am particularly interested in the current conversation you are having about the future of ethnic studies in our state.

Ethnic studies has a long history of reaching out to people who have experienced oppression in our society. Jewish people, of course, have long been the target of antisemitism both in this country and abroad. But we are not the only ones. My grandparents taught me that it is imperative to reach out to those in our society who have the least voice and least support - their lesson is one reason I became a teacher.

Right now, in our post-9/11 society, it is Arab Americans and Muslims who are the target of some of the most severe racism and erasure in this country. Ethnic studies does not meet its fundamental purpose if it gives voice to a group with more privilege and power over one that is struggling. And as a Jew, I can assure you, that while our struggles continue and are very real, they are not more important than the struggles of our Arab brothers and sisters.

I also am horrified that our California curriculum could entertain the idea that anti-Zionism is the same as antisemitism. I am anti-Zionist - and a Jew! The politics of Israel are complex and are indeed an important thing to learn about in our classrooms, but they should not be revered or held unaccountable for the very real oppression of the Palestinian people. To equate Zionism with Judaism is to provide our students with a false narrative even less truthful or complex than the ones of students in Israel itself.

Put me down as one of many Jewish Californian teachers who is disgusted with the recent political pressure of conservative Jewish groups trying to undermine the entire purpose of ethnic studies - to learn the hidden histories of each other and make room for alternative voices in our curriculum. We need not be afraid of difficult topics in the classroom! This is what the classroom is FOR.

Please reinstate Arab American studies into the main part of California's ethnic studies curriculum, and do not allow antisemitism to be down-graded to anti-Zionism. There are plenty of white supremacist Zionists in the world - it's hardly the place of our state to list those voices up.

Thank you,  
Ruby Goodall