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To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT

To The Instructional Quality Commission:

Ethnic studies saves lives. But that is REAL ethnic studies, *not* multicultural education. Ethnic studies places communities of color and indigenous communities at the CENTER of our work. Relegating Arab-American history to the APPENDIX is an erasure of an entire community. As a California public school teacher, and a proud Chicana ethnic studies educator, I demand that Arab-American be INCLUDED in the ethnic studies curriculum.

"When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you're not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing." Adrienne Rich

Arab-American babies and scholars deserve to see themselves reflected.

We know, from the demands for racial justice sweeping this county, that it is offensive and dangerous to shunt the histories and perspectives of people of color to the sidelines. These revisions are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in.

Our children are once again being left to fend for themselves in an increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. California should be a sanctuary, not a place of danger for our students and their families.

Young people in particular face the consequences of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Arab and Muslim youth are simultaneously invisibilized and targeted.

For too long, Arab youth have learned little about their history besides offensive and racist images and stereotypes. Arab-American studies curriculum provides a critical intervention to these stereotypes in K-12 education.

Pro-Israel interest groups should not define antisemitism. Definitions that name criticism of Israel as antisemitic are opposed by many Jewish organizations, both within the United States and internationally. These

definitions violate our constitutional right to free speech because their application censors virtually all criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian human rights and equality. These definitions also downplay the main source of antisemitism in the United States, which is white nationalism.

-Raquel Olvera