

From: David Sobel
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2019 10:27 PM
To: Ethnic Studies ; Superintendent
Cc: Tony Thurmond; JIAC
Subject: Concerns about flawed ethnic studies curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am deeply alarmed and concerned by the deeply flawed proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, but **urge you to 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. If you don't rewrite it, I'd rather you eliminate it all together than keep the racist curriculum that has been developed.

I was fortunate, in that I grew up in the NY tri-state area, where there was a broad understanding of multi-cultural backgrounds, and my Jewish faith was not singled out for discrimination or intolerance. However, my wife had a very different background. She grew up in rural Louisiana at a time when the former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke was running for governor and senator (and won more than 40% of the vote each time). As a Jewish American, she experienced a great deal of racism and Antisemitism directed her way.

Given her experiences with religious intolerance, we have felt fortunate to start and raise a family in California, a state has always been proud to be pluralistic and celebratory of its diverse population -- until this.

This curriculum is everything my wife tried to flee and is racist to its core. I support diversity and inclusion in our curriculum, but oppose a curriculum that erases American Jewish experience, fails to discuss antisemitism, reinforces negative stereotypes about Jews, singles out Israel for criticism, and would institutionalize the teaching of antisemitic stereotypes in our public schools. This is indefensible in light of rising antisemitism in America and especially on college campuses, and it frankly makes me scared for the educational environment that my children will experience as public school children.

I urge you to reconsider your curricular choices and adopt a far more balanced and holistic approach to your ethnic studies curriculum that both acknowledges the American Jewish experience as a worthwhile area of study and also discusses issues of anti-Semitism in both American and worldwide communities.

Thank you,
David Sobel
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