

From: B Koatz

Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 3:33 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] As a Jewish Voter - Please Keep Arabs in the Curriculum

Hello Instructional Quality Commission, Superintendent Thurmond and Chair Hammond

I am Binya Kóatz, a Jewish voter in the Bay Area, and I would like to lodge my deep support of a central Arab presence in the ethnic studies community, and my deep disagreement with those who name Arab and Palestinian identity as anti-semitic.

I am a practicing Jew. My grandfather grew up speaking Arabic in Morocco. There is nothing anti-semitic about Arab studies - and many Jews, like myself, are Arab as well.

The pitting of California against its Arab citizens is a perverse ploy by far-right groups, including far-right Zionist Christian and Jewish groups, who use Judaism as a cudgel to keep Arab and Palestinian voices down.

As a Jew - a young Jew, one raised in an observant family and who would like to have my own observant Jewish family here in California - I am writing to say that mentioning BDS is not anti-semitic, that talking about the Nakba is not anti-semitic and teaching about Arab Californians is completely distinct from anything to do with anti-semitism at all.

Please don't let the far-right of my community and Christian Zionists use Israel to silence Arab voices. The threat against Jews is not Palestinian liberation, but home-grown white nationalism. And you cannot equate a state that claims to be Jewish, with the Jewish people themselves. It is no more anti-semitic to criticize Israel and advocate for it to be a democratic, non-ethnic state, than it is anti-French to criticize France and say that it too should be a state for all its citizens.

In conclusion:

- Keep Arab studies central to Ethnic studies
- Stop censoring Palestinian Liberation
- And please don't claim to be doing it in the name of Jewish people. I and hundreds of thousands of young Jews like myself, do not want people silenced and oppressed in our name

May you see the light of truth in this moment
And be healthy and well

Binya Koatz