



*Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515*

*Anna G. Eshoo
Eighteenth District
California*

August 15, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao, Chair
Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, California 95814

To Chairwoman Chao,

I write to express my serious concerns about the current draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC).

While I applaud California's efforts to incorporate valuable ethnic studies in K-12 curriculums across the state, the ESMC draft fails to accurately reflect California's diverse communities or recognize anti-Semitism as a dangerous form of hatred and discrimination in America. Important religious and ethnic communities in California are omitted or scarcely mentioned throughout the ESMC, including Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Hindus and Koreans. These communities have a rich and important history in California and have been and continue to be subjected to discrimination and harmful stereotypes. Excluding or minimizing the importance of these groups is inconsistent with the goals of the ESMC.

While the ESMC identifies "forms of oppression, including, but not limited to, white supremacy, race and racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, islamophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia", anti-Semitism is not specifically mentioned as a form of oppression and the term only appears twice in the nearly 600 pages of the ESMC. Anti-Semitism is a vile form of hate and the shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue and the Chabad of Poway are terrible reminders that this hatred still exists. The Anti-Defamation League reported that there were 1,879 anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. just last year². This is a dangerous trend of behavior and expression that must be taken seriously.

¹ California. Department of Education. *Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview*. 2019. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmcpubcomment.asp>.

² Anti-Defamation League Center on Extremism. "Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents: Year in Review 2018." <https://www.adl.org/media/13144/download>.

I urge the Commission to revise the ESMC to better represent California's diverse ethnic and religious communities and identify the growing prevalence of anti-Semitism before presenting any final curriculum to the State Board of Education.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation and attention to this critical matter, and I look forward to your timely response.

Most gratefully,

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
California Department of Education
Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President, California State Board of Education
Ms. Stephanie Gregson, Executive Director, Instructional Quality
Commission