

From: Lily Anne Welty Tamai, Ph.D.
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 11:37 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] public comment regarding the ethnic studies curriculum

Dear Tony Thurmond and committee members,

As the chapter president of the Ventura County chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, and a lecturer in Asian American Studies at UCLA, I strongly urge you to include the history of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, in particular, Japanese Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans, other Southeast Asians, and South Asians) into the K-12 curriculum plan. What is proposed is incomplete. As a researcher and educator in the field of ethnic studies, it is vital to California's students to include more than just Chinese laborers on the railroad, and a few lines to mention Japanese American incarceration during World War II. My students at UCLA barely come with this knowledge, and nothing more about Asian American history. Asian American history is not just diverse in terms of demographics and communities but it also includes historic issues such as labor, immigration, women's issues, interracial marriage, refugee resettlement, legislation, racial relations, and the complexity of Japanese American incarceration.

California is, and has always been, more than about White and Black racial issues. California's history is nuanced, complicated, diverse, and includes many AAPI firsts: the first AAPI congressperson was Dalip Singh Sound from the Imperial Valley. Oxnard, California had one of the first interethnic labor strikes of Japanese and Mexican laborers in 1903, and was one of the first municipalities to have a mayor of Asian American descent. We have segregated Asian cemeteries on our soil. California's policy on Asian exclusion led to the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement. We had the 1913 Alien Land Law, where Junkichi Harada and his family were plaintiffs, and won. Filipino Americans and Mexican Americans went on strike together to form the United Farm Workers Union and won. We locked up Japanese American citizens on our soil. This state and its students deserve more than just 20th century didactic thinking and bifurcated, oversimplified information that excludes Asian Americans. They need an accurate history for the 21st century with updated content, material and examples, to be able to articulate the issues surrounding race, ethnicity, and diversity they will face in a much more racially diverse California. There is no lack of materials, biographies, and other resources. This is the time to not turn a blind eye to this growing demographic.

Good luck as you finalize your curriculum. I do hope you will consider reaching out to Asian American Studies scholars in the hopes you can incorporate this vital content.

All the best to you as we continue to shelter in place during these unprecedented times.

Kindest regards,
Lily Anne Welty Tamai, Ph.D.

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The [Asian American Studies Department at UCLA](#) acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders), and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.