

From: Kathryn Jordan

Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 1:33 PM

To: Ethnic Studies; [email redacted]; Tony Thurmond

Cc: [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Remove Political Agenda from CA Ethnic Studies

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission, State Board of Education, California Department of Education, and Governor Newsom,

We write to you as Californians. We are concerned that the current draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is a heavily politicized document, reflecting one political ideology and which compromises analytic considerations and discourse, thereby stunting the growth of the very students it aims to empower.

Who the students see as role models matters a great deal. A discussion of Japanese internment, without considering the contributions of Norman Mineta or Robert Matsui, known for their role in Japanese internment reparations, is very questionable. Not having Yo Yo Ma, the celebrated cellist as a prime example and having Fred Ho, a Marxist advocate and saxophonist who has accused Mr. Ma of selling out, is another wrong example. We note the clear omission of prominent Asian American scientists, business executives, doctors or tech entrepreneurs, which clearly show the negative biases of the authors of the model curriculum. This is not who we should have our children admire and aspire to.

We also believe that the Asian community should be fully and proportionately represented. We noted the total omission of Koreans and Indian Americans, yet a promise to include Arab Americans. This appears to be a highly politicized decision, and not one based on the equity and proportionality one would expect.

With an overall tone of oppressors and victims, we believe that the curriculum will only serve to further polarize rather than unify communities. A solid curriculum should inspire ethnic pride in all students and inspire them to work together, rather than against one another, to solve problems, build community and optimize opportunities for all of them. With the recent increase in violence and discrimination against Asian Americans, it becomes more important than ever that our culture be properly represented in the curriculum.

We respectfully urge you to assure the proposed unacceptable curriculum be replaced with one that more accurately represents Asian culture and contributions. We also ask that the curriculum add appropriate guidelines to prevent political proselytizing.

Thank you.

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