

From: Sia Kordestani

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 2:56 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum - Include Antisemitism & Middle Eastern-Americans

Dear CA Department of Education,

Nearly one million Jews were ethnically cleansed or fled antisemitic persecution in the Middle East and North Africa. I am troubled to see their stories and the diversity and oppression of California's Mizrahi Jews and of other Middle Eastern communities omitted from the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

I am a Middle Eastern Jewish resident of Los Angeles, California, and identify as one of the 500,000 Californians of Middle Eastern heritage who was ignored in the revised Ethnic Studies curriculum. My family comes from a region that is racially, ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse yet the revised Ethnic Studies curriculum fails to reflect Middle Eastern and Jewish demographics both here and abroad. As a Jewish-Iranian-American I am both Jewish and Middle Eastern.

My ancestors lived continuously in the Middle East for over 2,500 until they fled oppressive and systemic antisemitic persecution. In keeping with AB 2016's objective of "preparing pupils to be global citizens with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures," my community, and the more than 60% of other Middle Eastern groups in California deserve equal representation and inclusion in the Ethnic Studies Model [Curriculum.At](#) a time when there is great need to provide our students with high-quality educational content related to bigotry, it is essential to incorporate adequate instructional material on antisemitism – not just simplistic references to it.

Thank you,

Siamak Kordestani