

From: IQC
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2019 11:05 AM
To: Kenneth McDonald
Subject: FW: Constituent comments about Ethnic Studies Curriculum

From: Assemblymember Low
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2019 10:48 AM
To: IQC
Cc: Tran, Kathy
Subject: Constituent comments about Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Hello,

I am an intern from Assemblymember Evan Low's office (AD 28). We received a note from a constituent, Toly Novik, regarding the proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum and want to pass along the comments. They are as follows:

"I am writing regarding California's Department of Education Instructional Quality Commission's proposed ethnic studies model curriculum. As requested by your public comment form, I have concerns with the following content: The glossary for the curriculum includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to, "establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions". It then parrots more BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel's existence. This definition is not only entirely one-sided but its inclusion elevates a fringe perspective against Israel into the mainstream and entirely politicizes the national origin of a major California community of Israeli-American immigrants. No other nation or national origin is subject to the same treatment in the model curriculum. Most disturbingly, the model curriculum's definition of BDS in its current form is akin to defining the Ku Klux Klan as a social movement that promotes free speech and free expression while ignoring the organization's racist underpinnings. The sample lesson plans for the curriculum: Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234). Promote a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico (p. 234). Use unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237). Frame the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242). Encourage teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel"

Best regards,
Maria Budman
Intern