

UCSF Department of Psychiatry at
Zuckerberg San Francisco General
Hospital and Trauma Center

1001 Potrero Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94110
Tel: 628.206.8426
Fax: 628.206.8942

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Ms. Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the anti-Jewish bias of the proposed California Ethnic Studies Curriculum, manifested through its complete omission of the Jewish experience in the United States, its failure to include Antisemitism among the expressions of discrimination and racism that it lists, and its distorted and prejudicial depiction of the Israel-Arab conflict.

As a Jewish Latina, I am well aware that cultural identity is complex and multifaceted and that historical trauma too often lives on in the form of ongoing marginalization, stereotyping, racism, and discrimination. For the past 40 years, I have been a faculty member in the UCSF Department of Psychiatry, where I direct an early childhood mental health program dedicated to healing the impact of current and historical trauma in the form of community and interpersonal violence perpetrated against disenfranchised young children and their families. Our training program explicitly focuses on social justice as integral to mental health and we provide multicultural, trauma-informed mental health training to predoctoral and postdoctoral psychology, psychiatry and social work students with the goal of equipping them to work with underserved populations.

Given this background, I know the difference between teaching critical thinking and ideological indoctrination. The proposed curriculum trades one form of “othering” for another and takes the stereotyping of Jews to a dangerous new level by equating Jews with the oppressor and making Antisemitism invisible in spite of its being the most frequent form of hate crimes according to FBI figures.

I have the greatest respect for the integrity of the Instructional Quality Commission and its devotion to its mission. I urge you to ensure that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum adheres to the guidelines that call for its being inclusive and supportive of all students and uphold concepts that include love and respect. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Alicia F. Lieberman, Ph.D.
Irving Harris Endowed Chair in Infant Mental Health
Professor, UCSF Department of Psychiatry
Director, Child Trauma Research Program
Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital

