

**From:** Manpreet Kaur Sandhu  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 6:23 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** Sikh inclusion in CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee,

I am writing today to request the meaningful inclusion of Sikhism in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for entry into the public record.

My name is Manpreet Kaur and I have called California my home for the entirety of my life. I have attended UC San Diego and am now at the University of Wisconsin, Madison pursuing a Master's in Public Affairs with a focus in Social Policy and Education Policy. I am a proud product of the public schools of Bakersfield, CA where my most formative years and experiences were in the classroom and in my local Sikh community.

I had the great privilege of pursuing my higher education at UC San Diego as a Political Science major, where I soon found what felt like my true calling - the Ethnic Studies major. My particular college within UCSD - Thurgood Marshall College - upholds the requirement for undergraduate students to take a series of three Ethnic Studies classes. I was sitting in a lecture hall with 300 of my peers learning about Caesar Chavez and the farmworker strikes in Kern County in disbelief and awe, yet beaming with pride that my community's history was being memorialized and institutionalized in a such way for students.

My Ethnic Studies classes, professors, and TAs inspired me to pursue a career that serves my community. Upon graduating I became a community organizer in the Sikh community, working towards civic engagement, advocacy, neighborhood empowerment, and youth activism in Kern County. My four years as a community organizer inspired me to apply to Graduate School in order to learn public policy in great depth as I hope to use my newfound knowledge and skills to better serve the communities in California.

With the utmost confidence, I can say my Ethnic Studies major at UCSD changed the trajectory of my life. Had I been given the same opportunity to learn about Sikh Californian history in high school, I can only marvel at the possibilities and impact on my undergraduate career.

I am extremely disappointed that the Sikh community, which has been an integral part of California's history and economy since the early 1900s, is not represented in a meaningful way in the initial Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft.

There are approximately 250,000 Sikhs in California. A report by the Sikh Coalition found that turbaned Sikhs are bullied at a rate double the national average. I wish to reiterate that the inclusion of Sikhism, the world's fifth largest religion, in the model curriculum in a meaningful way, is an essential step in overcoming ignorance and in reducing bullying and harassment.

Specifically, I request:

1. A detailed lesson plan about the Sikh American community to be inserted into the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.
2. More specific examples throughout the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that focus on the myriad of *positive* Sikh contributions made over 125 years in California, to balance the current language's focus on the hateful backlash against Sikhs in the context of post-9/11 Islamophobia.

The Sikh Coalition and the Jakara Movement will be in communication with you soon, specifying the details of these requests. I ask that the recommendations made in their forthcoming letter be incorporated into the final Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum on my behalf.

Yours sincerely,

**ਮਨਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ Manpreet Kaur**

MPA Candidate | University of Wisconsin, Madison | La Follette School of Public Affairs