

From: Bhajneet Singh

Sent: Tue 3/24, 1:36 PM

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 Bhajneet Singh and I have been a resident of California since I was born, 1981. I live in La Canada and work in Los Angeles. I have 3 children, ages 5, 3, and 2. My eldest will be starting kinder at Poly Technic school in Pasadena.

I grew up in La Canada and went to Paradise Canyon Elementary and then on to La Canada High School. In our school, I was the only Sikh kid and there was absolutely no education about the Sikhs. I experienced name calling, bullying and other forms of taunting while at school and strongly feel that with education we can make sure other kids don't face the same issues.

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,

Bhajneet Singh