

From: carol boice

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 3:47 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Instructional Quality Commission on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Commission,

My name is Carol Boice, and I am concerned with the negative and biased portrayal of America in the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I am 78 years old and have taught U.S. History, Civics, and World History as a professional and for volunteer programs for 45 years. My career teaching history began after 8 years of college earning a BA in World History and French, MA in U.S. Diplomatic History, and 2 years of post-graduate level course work in World and U.S. History. In my long lifetime involvement with different cultures I have visited 54 countries on 6 continents, many considered "third world" cultures. Plus, my home was also home to many high school American Field Service year-students from around the world. Also, as an AFS volunteer coordinator, I gave international cultural training sessions to American high school students studying abroad as to how to adjust to living in foreign cultures where they did not even speak the language.

I do appreciate the Commission's attempt at diversity education to promote tolerance and respect for other cultures, religions, races, gender, LGBTQ, languages, etc., but am worried it will not be done in a positive and optimistic manner. I have learned from my half-century of teaching about different cultures that the best way to understand one another is to go about it chronologically. To go about this task topically simply sets students up for out-of-context situations and inaccurate conclusions to complex and intricate situations with false and damaging impressions. The way we are today has a long and complicated, unfolding past. A curriculum of negative "sound bites" is not enough. When I was a young teacher in the 1960's trying to wake students up to the world's problems, a student raised his hand and asked, "hasn't anything good happened in the world?" Was my message that there is no hope, and we are helpless? Immediately, I realized that the message should be that "yes" we have problems, but history has shown how we have persevered with courage, optimism, confidence, positivity, and hope to solve problems now and will do so in the future.

Many of our American Founding Fathers were deists and products of the European Enlightenment. They established this new nation on the basis of learning from past mistakes and the optimism of European "philosophes," who gave us a "can do" attitude. They believed in a positive "theory of progress" that we can and have always done better. From Stone Age primitive man to advanced civilizations we can always progress and do better, but not if we are dragged down with a concentration on how evil Americans have been. What is the message to students? Be depressed, see only the bad side and not the good? Please build the confidence in our young people that America is not all bad, and emphasize that good is out there to overcome the bad through understanding our long and complicated past involving the whole world. Please be positive and optimistic, without blame and shame, that we can build a better future.