

From: Laura Easley

Sent: Sunday, September 27, 2020 12:56 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Laura Easley, and I am a parent and an educator. I wish to voice my support for the Ethnic Studies Curriculum as it is currently drafted.

It has come to my attention that there are groups, such as the "Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies" (ACES), who are advocating against the current draft because it is too "anti-capitalist", and there are fears that anything that is too "pro-Marxism" will be inherently and unavoidably anti-Semitic. While I denounce anti-Semitism in all its forms, I believe both the originators of Ethnic Studies as a formal academic discipline, as well as those that the ACES group purport to revere, such as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., had legitimate concerns with capitalism and the exploitation of the vulnerable inherent in any political structure that values profit-making over communal wellbeing.

I am concerned that your committee will receive a flood of comments that encourage you to dilute the power of the current Ethnic Studies curriculum - not because these comments are indicative of either the truth or of the beliefs of the majority, but because this particular group who oppose it are already well-organized and mobilized.

I urge you to resist those calls, and continue to preserve the curriculum with legitimate questions of the strengths and weaknesses of capitalism, as this is in line with both the founding groups' intent and the experiences of many financially nondominant communities in our country today (eg, those who have experienced poisoned water and air due to proximity to certain chemical manufacturing plants, and have higher incidences of cancer in their communities as a result).

In closing, a bit about my credentials. I am a parent of a 22 year old, a 6 year old, and a 1 year old, the younger two of whom are currently being educated in California (the oldest is serving in our military). I have worked in curriculum development and/or professional development in and for many districts around our country, including New York City Department of Education, Boston Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Kansas Department of Education, and Pasadena Independent School District (in TX, not CA), and currently work through an education reform nonprofit associated with the Stanford Graduate School of Education.

Because I have worked in curriculum for many different districts and states, I believe I have strong credentials to say that I believe the current draft allows for the flexibility needed for each community to implement the curriculum with a focus on that community's needs and history, while also preserving the fidelity to the founders' intent. I urge you to not change the curriculum further in response to community pressure, without being sure that community pressure is truly representative of all Californians, especially the nondominant communities meant to be strengthened by the field of Ethnic Studies.

Sincerely,
Laura Easley