

From: Carmen de Monteflores

Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 11:37 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep Jews included in California Ethnic Studies

Dear State Board of Education,

Thank you for your latest revisions to the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, including the critical addition of sample lessons reflecting the diversity of the Jewish community. The latest draft has kept out explicitly denigrating content and features meaningful inclusion of Jewish Americans as well as an important acknowledgement of antisemitism, while still honoring the traditional four groups and their 50-year fight for inclusion.

Our community is grateful for these changes and believes they will help teachers appreciate the value of teaching about Jewish Americans in the ethnic studies classroom. However, we are concerned about efforts to reinsert divisive language and bias that doesn't belong in the classroom and that runs counter to the State Board of Education Guidelines and State Education Code.

Members of the Jewish community are common targets of extremist hatred and violence for their background and beliefs. We know that part of the antidote to this hatred lies in education about the unique contributions of Jewish Americans and the critical role antisemitism plays in white supremacy. It is equally important that antisemitism not be defined without input by the people threatened by it. Furthermore, because a significant percentage of the Jewish community is made up of people of color, individuals who experience antisemitism may also experience racism. We must acknowledge that these and other forms of oppression are not mutually exclusive.

California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum will be used in thousands of classrooms, have influence in every high school statewide and will almost certainly be emulated by other states. We therefore ask that you retain Sample Lessons 40 and 41, "Antisemitism and Jewish Middle Eastern-Americans" and "Jewish Americans: Identity, Intersectionality, and Complicating Ideas of Race," and that you keep bias against Jews and other marginalized communities out.

This is extremely important. Anti-Semitism is on the rise in the U.S. We must combat it especially in the schools. I am a retired psychologist and know what grave negative impact misinformation and lies can affect people, especially young minds.

Sincerely,
Carmen de Monteflores
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Berkeley, CA