

From: Deepraj Kaur Randhawa
Sent: Thursday 3/26, 11:32 AM
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 Deepraj Kaur Randhawa and I have been a resident of California my entire life, since 1978. I live in Roseville CA and I am a dentist that is currently a stay at home mother. I have two children, a thirteen year old daughter that is in 8th grade at Chilton Middle school in Roseville City School District and a seven year old son in the 2nd grade at Rocklin Academy Gateway in Newcastle Elementary School District.

As someone who is born and raised in California and someone who's entire K-12 education was done in the public school classrooms of Ceres Unified School District, I have been greatly disappointed in the total lack of representation of Sikhs and Sikhism in all discussions and lessons regarding religion and ethnic studies. I never felt included or represented when my teachers would have lessons that discussed various religions or ethnicities. I never felt that I had a voice, it was like no one could see me, but I've always been here. Now as my children are in public school in California, going through the same lack of representation, I feel sad that nothing has changed in 41 years. An example that sticks out in my mind is that both my children learned about various religions in their 1st grade curriculum and nowhere was Sikhism mentioned.

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,

Deepraj Kaur Randhawa