

From: Martin Snitow
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:14 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission,

As a California citizen and voter for over 40 years, and as a parent of two children who attended public elementary and high school in California, I write to protest the revised draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. This draft, like the original, is racist, hurtful and politically extreme.

A proposed curriculum that is based in part on a source that sees Education as War is flawed. A curriculum that demonizes one people and seeks to boycott, divest and sanction it has no place in our State. The Palestinian issue is complex, but neither side can claim to be without fault.

Discrimination, prejudice and privilege are real problems today. Police violence against unarmed blacks and peaceful demonstrators must end. But most police officers do not agree with or participate in brutality. More effective ways to prevent and punish this behavior are needed, even as we support police who uphold the law.

Job and housing discrimination are already illegal, and here in California both the DFEH and private nonprofits actively seek out and prosecute violations. Substantial progress has been made and continues.

The real progress we as Americans have made also deserves prominent mention. Before the Civil War, many white Americans opposed slavery. Afterwards, the United States abolished slavery. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. Several Civil Rights Acts and Voting Rights Acts have made equality the moral and legal norm.

Both blacks and whites fought and sometimes died to end racial discrimination in our country. In 1965, as part of the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, James Cheney (a black man), Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman (white Jews from New York City) died at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan while trying to register poor blacks to vote. Andrew Goodman was a college classmate of mine. A history of repression must be acknowledged. Still, our progress needs to be celebrated even as we continue to seek improvement.

Education is *not* war. Education should be about learning to hear diverse views, including those that disagree with our preconceptions. It should be about learning to evaluate facts and to disregard political memes intended to divide us. Education should help us learn to think.

Thank you.

Martin S. Snitow

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