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Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 4:45 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; [emails redacted]

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] I want Arab American studies in ethnic studies!

It is a shame that Ethnic Studies curriculum is getting watered down at a time when we most need it to be anti-racist and centering of BIPOC communities. Ethnic Studies has origins in BIPOC struggle, for too long we have had nothing but white-washed history centering racists and white supremacists and making them out to be heroes. This has led to self-hate and internalized racism for many BIPOC communities, and fostered the flame of white supremacy that then gave us the Presidency of D. Trump. I urge you to listen to the experts of Ethnic Studies curriculum and accept their leadership so in the long-haul we can have the inclusive and just communities we deserve. Please include Arab American studies in a robust and meaningful way, not relegated to the Appendix.

Additional points I want to elevate:

- We know, from the demands for racial justice sweeping this county, that it is offensive and dangerous to shunt the histories and perspectives of people of color to the sidelines. These revisions are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in.
- Our children are once again being left to fend for themselves in an increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. California should be a sanctuary, not a place of danger for our students and their families.
- Young people in particular face the consequences of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Arab and Muslim youth are simultaneously invisibilized and targeted.
- For too long, Arab youth have learned little about their history besides offensive and racist images and stereotypes. Arab-American studies curriculum provides a critical intervention to these stereotypes in K-12 education.
- Pro-Israel interest groups should not define antisemitism. Definitions that name criticism of Israel as antisemitic are opposed by many Jewish organizations, both within the United States and internationally. These definitions violate our constitutional right to free speech because their application censors virtually all criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian human rights and equality. These definitions also downplay the main source of antisemitism in the United States, which is white nationalism.