

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
General	<p><i>Shahnee Chen-Zion Concerned California Resident</i></p> <p><i>Independent College Counselor (I work with high school students)</i></p>	<p>While I support having an ethnic studies program in our schools, I feel that the current curriculum is riddled with alarming problems. A recent Aug 4th editorial in the LA times that points out that “the proposed ethnic studies curriculum feels like an exercise in groupthink, designed to proselytize and inculcate more than to inform and open minds. It talks about critical thinking but usually offers one side and one side only. This curriculum feels like it is more about imposing predigested political views on students than about widening their perspectives.” I agree with this.</p> <p>I work with high school students who are preparing to apply to colleges all around the country and I stress the importance of embracing cultural diversity and inclusion and opening their minds to a variety of experiences, people and perspectives. I also stress the importance of thinking critically and the value of honest intellectual engagement with people who disagree with you. Unfortunately, the currently proposed ethnic studies curriculum doesn’t promote those values.</p> <p>As an Israeli/Jewish-American, I am also extremely concerned with the rise in antisemitic rhetoric and violent activity in America and on our college campuses. On campuses, this often includes physical intimidation and extreme marginalization of students who express support for Israel. I feel that this curriculum will further embolden and even encourage students to continue this type of behavior. The curriculum also doesn’t include antisemitism as a form of bigotry (and in fact uses antisemitic language) and presents Israel in the light of a single Palestinian narrative without making mention that there are many nuanced narratives and a complex history of the Jewish people and the region. Please see more specific comments to follow.</p>

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Glossary	Same as above	Page 2, lines 29-40 – This section features a definition which clearly promotes the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” It then parrots more one-sided BDS talking points, offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, including that its true purpose, as stated by its co-founder and leading activists, is to end the existence of Israel, the only Jewish state.
Chapter 2	Same as above	Page 234, lines 4956-4958 – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234). • Promotes a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico.
Chapter 2	Same as above	Page 237, lines 5024-5032 – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country.
Chapter 2	Same as above	Page 242, lines 5157-5161 – This section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.

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Chapter 2	Same as above	<p><i>Page 256, lines 5477-5494, pages 264-270, lines 5692-5830</i> – These sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teachers to use an anti-Israel poem which insinuates Jews control the media and use it to manipulate the public - a common, and quintessential, antisemitic slur.
General	Same as above	<p>The Introduction of the proposed curriculum states that “[t]he implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to...enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.” Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community or antisemitism, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a significant problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews and antisemitism from this curriculum is deeply disappointing and educationally deficient.</p>

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General	<i>Same as above</i>	<p>The biased sections and omissions listed above run counter to the stated purpose of the curriculum, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 1(a): The State of California is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all its pupils;• Section 1(f): The state’s educational standards should be guided by core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations; and• Section 1(g): The state is committed to its efforts to provide all pupils with excellent educational opportunities, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, income, sexual orientation, or disability. <p>Additionally, California Education Code § 233.5(a) provides:</p> <p>"Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and <i>the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations</i>, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government." (Emphasis added).</p> <p>The rise of antisemitism within our culture, which has been accompanied by an increasing general threat to freedom, human dignity and harmonious relations, is evidenced by the recent attacks of Jews in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, as well as against other American citizens in El Paso and Dayton. The curriculum’s failure to address antisemitism as a form of bigotry thus falls short of the above directive.</p> <p>Furthermore, the California Education Code’s Prohibition of Discrimination states, in relevant part, that “[n]o person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion... in any program or activity conducted by an</p>
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		<p>educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid.”</p> <p>Similarly, the California Education Code’s Prohibition Instruction includes a provision on Prejudice that states, in relevant part, that “[a] teacher shall not give instruction and a school district shall not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation...” This provision, like the Prohibition of Discrimination mentioned above, illustrates the problems inherent in the proposed curriculum, and are not an exhaustive list of the provisions of the California Education Code with which the proposed curriculum appears to be in conflict.</p> <p>The model curriculum not only fails to address antisemitism as a form of bigotry but actually includes thinly veiled antisemitic rhetoric and promotes the discriminatory BDS movement. Additionally, the model curriculum simultaneously fails to provide balance with regard to Israel or any education at all about Jews. Therefore, it effectively discriminates against Jewish and Israeli students in violation of the education code. Additionally, by marginalizing Jewish and Israeli students, the model curriculum violates the three above-referenced declarations of the California state legislature in enacting the legislation.</p> <p>We note the critical LA Times’ review of the curriculum, and hope that the values of inclusion prevail over hatred, division, and misinformation. In closing, we strongly urge you to review and revise the curriculum to remove bias and to educate students about American Jews as an ethnic group, including those who fled the Holocaust, oppression in the Middle East, and discrimination in the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, we call on you to create safeguards that will prevent similar bias and omissions in this and other California state curriculums going forward.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.</p>
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