

From: Azita

Sent: Monday, August 12, 2019 10:39 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: Urgent: Our nation should not allow Anti-Semitic bigotry poisoning our young minds & future generation

I, Mehrnaz Zerehi, as a caring and responsible U.S. citizen urge you to correct the curriculum and avoid tainting young minds with lies and directed propaganda of terror. First it was physical attacks against our free country and now our young minds are being attacked.

The Proposed Curriculum is Severely Flawed and Unfit for Use

The proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum, developed by the California Department of Education, is deeply flawed and unfit for use. As outlined below, these flaws include the pervasive use of material falsehoods, misrepresentations, and the exclusion of necessary facts and foundational information. It is apparent that the authors' bear a predatory purpose: to systematically facilitate the development of anti-Israel perspectives among impressionable students.

This matter is particularly insulting and outrageous given that California's Jewish and Israeli-American communities have gone to great lengths to make the truth readily accessible to our broader community. Indeed, the pool of instructive resources and relationships at the disposal of educational administrators and state policymakers is vast. Any objective observer of the proposed curriculum can readily gather its systematic employment of demonization, delegitimization and double standards – each of which can indicate anti-Semitism. Sadly, even the mere proposition of this curriculum brings into doubt the intellectual standards and moral character of many who are involved in California's educational system.

In November 2005, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recognized that anti-Israel sentiment can cross the line into anti-Semitism, and in the Commission's words, "should be distinguished from legitimate discourse regarding foreign policy." The Commission clearly stated: "Anti-Semitic bigotry is no less morally deplorable when camouflaged as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism." The Commission specifically called on educational administrators to publicly speak out and "set a moral example by denouncing anti-Semitic and other hate speech, while safeguarding all rights protected under the First Amendment and under basic principles of academic freedom." The U.S. Department of Education's Office on Civil Rights has made the same recommendation to educational administrators.

In March 2008, the U.S. State Department issued a detailed report on anti-Semitism globally, recognizing that anti-Zionist sentiment and criticism of Israel can cross the line into anti-Jewish bigotry. Whether intended or not, such sentiment and criticism can have the effect of promoting prejudice against Jews. As an example, the State Department noted that demonizing Israel and/or Israelis "as barbaric, unprincipled, selfish, inhumane, etc. is anti-Semitic and has the effect of causing audiences to associate those bad attributes with Jews in general." This type of anti-Semitism is no less hurtful or harmful than more traditional forms of anti-Jewish bigotry.

Basic decency demands that the California Department of Education write a new curriculum that is objective, factually correct, apolitical, and grounded in the values of tolerance and respect for all.

The Proposed Curriculum Promotes National-Origin Based Discrimination and Would Make California Party to Anti-Semitic Hatred (Page 2, Lines 30-40)

Among the most disturbing aspects of the proposed curriculum is its promotion of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction Movement (BDS). BDS is the formal name given to the economic and political warfare component of a campaign being waged against the world's one and only Jewish country - attacking virtually every aspect of its historic, legal, political, economic and cultural life - with the aim of undermining the sovereignty, security and legitimacy of Israel's very existence. More specifically, BDS refers to the tactics employed to discriminate against Israelis, Jews, their trade partners and supporters. BDS promotes discrimination against Israel on the basis of national origin.

It is a thoroughly documented fact that in the course of promoting discrimination against Israel, the BDS Movement purposefully uses misinformation and baseless claims, as well as classic anti-Semitic themes, such as the suggestion of Jewish subversion, conspiracy, disloyalty, greed and economic control, and most importantly, blood libels. The overwhelming presence of such falsehoods dispenses with any need to consider the threshold where legitimate criticism of the Israel crosses the line into anti-Semitism. The BDS Movement's messaging strategy not only seeks to promote negative perceptions of Israel, but also bigoted perspectives aimed at the state's Jewish character and supporters. The State of California must not be made party to anti-Semitic hatred.

The Proposed Curriculum Poses a Material Threat to the Safety and Civil Rights of Pro-Israel, Jewish and Israeli-American Students

Boycotts of entities and individuals of specific countries often amount to ethnic, religious, racial and nationality discrimination. History repeatedly shows that when boycotts and bigoted propaganda are aimed at Jewish persons in particular, it eventually gives way to severe anti-Semitic discrimination, and ultimately to violent persecution. It is no coincidence that all current research data indisputably shows that Jews are among the most likely of all minority groups to be victimized in incidents motivated by hate, particularly within educational institutions.

The attempt of the proposed curriculum to promote national-origin discrimination efforts against Israel directly contradicts the public policy of our federal government and the state of California, and the essential values of our community. If implemented, the curriculum would quickly lead to an environment of fear, intimidation and harassment for pro-Israel and Jewish students, particularly Israeli-Americans.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention taking action for removal of damaging mis-information.