

From: Steve Greenberg
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2019 3:14 PM
To: Ethnic Studies; Tony Thurmond
Subject: VERY WORRIED about the proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum

The draft curriculum for the proposed Ethnic Studies courses presents a LOT of red flags and great anxiety that I and others see over where this is heading: political agendas that will demonize whole classes of citizens and students.

There are political biases and political correctness evident in the language and focus of the proposals that have the potential for indoctrination rather than education, and for intimidation of certain groups of students.

Let me point out that I am a moderate liberal, a lifelong Democrat and a career journalist. I am also Jewish. There seems to be draft language including the Palestinian-Israel conflict and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in the curriculum -- what does this have to do with California education? -- in a way to promote a specific view that Israel and its Jewish supporters are part of "interlocking systems of oppression and privilege" that must be fought with "direct action" and "resistance." To describe BDS as a social movement "whose aim is to achieve freedom through equal rights and justice" is HIGHLY prejudicial as well as untruthful and misleading.

This is a very biased, one-sided agenda that will leave Jewish students intimidated, defensive, anxious and afraid. We've seen this already play out on California's college campuses. Attacks on Jews -- verbal, abusive, physical and sometimes violent -- are up enormously in recent years, spurred on by not just the far-right, but also by the left and by Muslim advocates trying to tie a complex Mideast situation into "intersectional" resistance movements.

Jewish students, and Jewish citizens in general, will be subject to harassment for being part of some "white privilege" class despite Jews having led nearly every social movement of the past century. And where is the part of the curriculum presenting the many positive contributions of Jewish Americans and Jewish Californians?

There are many other red flags in the draft. Capitalism is demonized among "forms of power and oppression" yet this is the current system of California life; to demonize it in this way is highly biased and one-sided. Ethnic studies should broaden and educate, not scold, demonize and shut down anyone not part of "the oppressed" as some individuals might define it.

How is there to be any balance in what students are taught? The draft curriculum presents a virtual Pandora's Box of one-sided views that will close, not open, the debate and certainly leave many students -- Jewish, suburban, moderate, conservative, non-minority and otherwise -- intimidated and quite possibly afraid.

I am neither a conservative nor a Zionist, but fear for those who hold such views under the draft curriculum.

sincerely,
Steven Greenberg
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