



Member Organizations

Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
Jewish Community Federation & Endowment Fund
JCRC Bay Area
Jewish Family Service LA
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties
30 Years After
American Jewish Committee
Anti-Defamation League
Bet Tzedek Legal Services
ETTA
Hadassah
HIAS
Holocaust Museum Los Angeles
JCRC of Jewish Silicon Valley
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Community Relations Council of Sacramento
Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Long Beach and Orange County
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Family Service of the Desert
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Federation of Orange County
Jewish Federation of San Diego County
Jewish Federation of the Desert
Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys
Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region
Jewish Free Loan Association
Jewish Long Beach
Jewish Vocational Service San Francisco
JVS SoCal

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jpac-cal.org

June 27, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California

The Honorable Rob Bonta
Attorney General of California

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
Superintendent of Public Instruction of California

Re: Ethnic Studies Implementation

Dear Governor Newsom, Attorney General Bonta, and Superintendent Thurmond,

The Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC) – the largest single-state coalition of Jewish organizations in the nation – and the Jewish organizations signed on below are deeply appreciative of your ongoing commitments to addressing antisemitism and ensuring a thriving Jewish future in our state. It is in this spirit that we ask for your support and timely intervention in light of compounding challenges with the development and implementation of mandatory ethnic studies courses in our high schools pursuant to AB 101.

We believe that ethnic studies deepens students' understanding of American history and promotes equity and inclusiveness. A pedagogically sound ethnic studies course will promote respect among students by teaching about the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions to our nation.

Unfortunately, in recent months, Jewish communities across our state have discovered discriminatory content in several school districts, in which antisemitic and/or anti-Israel biases are being adopted in ethnic studies curricula. This comes at a time when rising antisemitism is impacting Jewish students throughout California. Many additional districts are partnering with ethnic studies contractors affiliated with the authors of the rejected, antisemitic first draft of the model curriculum. We believe these contractors are subverting the final state-approved model curriculum, and the number of districts with problematic content is likely to grow. The districts our community organizations are deeply concerned about are geographically and demographically diverse, such as Jefferson Union High School District (San Mateo County), Hayward Unified, Castro Valley Unified, and Santa Ana Unified. Furthermore, these challenges have led our community organizations to invest thousands of hours towards ensuring ethnic studies courses will not promote bias, bigotry, or discrimination against Jewish and Israeli students. This diverts resources away from core Jewish community needs and services.

We are asking for your leadership by writing a letter or memo – together or individually – to county offices of education, school board members, and district superintendents across the state, urging the following as districts move to adopt ethnic studies courses: (1) act in compliance with AB 101 “guardrails,” (2) reflect the state-approved Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, and (3) include Jewish Americans in their ethnic studies courses, as recommended by the Biden-Harris Administration’s U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.

1. The AB 101 “guardrails” protect Jewish and Israeli American students from curriculum instruction and instructional materials that promote bias, bigotry, or discrimination:

(v) Curriculum, instruction, and instructional materials for a course described in clause (ii) shall meet all of the following requirements:

(I) Be appropriate for use with pupils of all races, religions, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, and diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, pupils with disabilities, and English learners.

(II) Not reflect or promote, directly or indirectly, any bias, bigotry, or discrimination against any person or group of persons on the basis of any category protected by Section 220.

(vi) It is the intent of the Legislature that local educational agencies not use the portions of the draft model curriculum that were not adopted by the Instructional Quality Commission due to concerns related to bias, bigotry, and discrimination.

As ethnic studies courses, curriculum, and professional development are developed, it is important to remember that nationality, ethnicity, and religion are also protected categories in the Education Code.

2. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, approved by the State Board of Education, reflects 18 months of input from diverse stakeholders across many communities invested in ethnic studies courses.
3. President Biden’s ambitious and urgently needed [US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) calls on state and local governments to include Jewish Americans and antisemitism education in Ethnic Studies courses:

We call on state and local governments to include Jewish studies in ethnic studies and history curricula. Lessons should include Jewish history, as well as curricula on positive Jewish contributions to America, Jewish diversity, and manifestations of contemporary antisemitism.

We call on state and local governments to consider using materials published by Jewish organizations to help students to identify antisemitic tropes, words, and symbols that often hide in plain sight, as well as learn about how biases can lead to acts of hate, discrimination, and violence.

Many school districts are already teaching some version of ethnic studies, and in fifteen months, all of our state’s 1,000+ school districts will be teaching ethnic studies in accordance with AB 101. With your leadership and partnership today, we can ensure California’s ethnic studies rollout is successful in representing our shared values of diversity and inclusion, and our unequivocal opposition to hate against any group.

If you have questions, please contact JPAC’s lobbyist Cliff Berg at 916-208-3142 or CBerg@govadv.com. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to discussing this further with you.

Sincerely,



David Bocarsly
Executive Director
JPAC – Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California



Cliff Berg
Legislative Advocate



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Board Chair



Jasmin Niku Hakimi
Co-President
30 Years After



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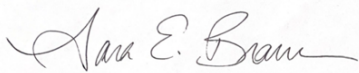
Gregg Solkovits
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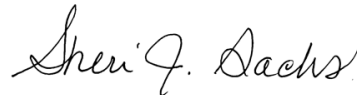
Rabbi Serena Eisenberg
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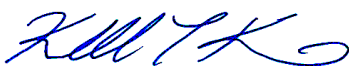
Lauren Klatzker
President
Democrats for Israel – Orange County



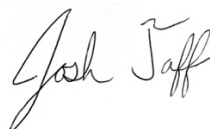
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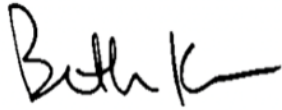
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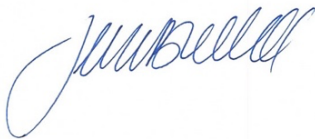
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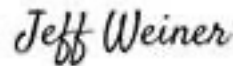
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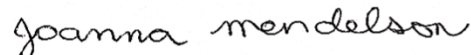
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