



May 29, 2020

Senator Ben Allen
Chair, California Legislative Jewish Caucus
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

Members of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus,

We are writing you to express the critical need for the California Department of Education (CDE) to take immediate action to protect California Jewish students who are targeted and discriminated against because of their religious beliefs and identity.

We thank you for your leadership in calling for changes to the CDE's alarming 2019 draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that would have excluded Jews as an ethnic minority, demonized Jewish self-determination, and supported the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, while promoting misinformation and Jewish stereotypes.

Unfortunately, antisemitism has been growing in California public schools, particularly in middle schools and high schools. Manifestations of antisemitism span not only classic tropes of Jew-hatred (e.g. "Jews control the world"), but also include expressions of hate and delegitimization of the Jewish State ("Zionism is racism" and "IDF soldiers are baby killers"). For American Jewish teens, Israel and Zionism are inextricably linked to their Jewish identity.

A recent survey conducted by Club Z, a national Zionist youth movement, indicates that schools are failing to provide Jewish teenagers with a safe learning environment. Jewish students are openly ridiculed and harassed by their classmates and in some cases even by their teachers—in one top California school, a teacher made the appalling claim that "Jews didn't really do anything productive over the course of their existence. They mostly just wandered the desert killing their own babies." This hate is also found in school textbooks and curricula. The Palo Alto Unified School District recommended third through fifth graders read a book glorifying Hitler. Additional examples range from CA teachers assigning [Hitler-inspired projects](#) to [Nazi salutes](#) and [graffiti](#) to normalized [antisemitic rhetoric](#) among students.

Furthermore, the outcome of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum remains in flux and Jewish and other minority groups continue to have [serious concerns](#) about the draft's ultimate disposition and that it is not being adequately revised.

We therefore believe in the necessity of the CDE's adoption of the attached Jewish Students' Bill of Rights to safeguard the rights of Jewish students in California from harassment, bullying, and curricula that is used to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish State. The universal rights outlined in the document are the most basic things that every student deserves: (1) The Right to Free Expression (2)

The Right to a Fair Education (3) The Right to a Safe Learning Environment (4) The Right to a Comprehensive Definition of Antisemitism, and (5) The Right to Fair Protections.

We request that you, as Members of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, call on the CDE to adopt the Jewish Students' Bill of Rights, and in accordance with this document, ensure that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is revised in a manner that is free from anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic, and BDS-promoting content.

We thank you for your ongoing work in safeguarding the rights of Jewish students and appreciate your consideration of the Jewish Students' Bill of Rights. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Masha Merkulova
Founder & Executive Director, Club Z

- cc: Senator Ben Allen (District 26)
 Chair, California Legislative Jewish Caucus
- Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (District 45)
 Vice-Chair, California Legislative Jewish Caucus
- Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (District 16)
 Member, California Legislative Jewish Caucus
- Assemblymember Marc Berman (District 24)
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- Assemblymember Richard Bloom (District 50)
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- Assemblymember Laura Friedman (District 43)
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- Assemblymember Marc Levine (District 10)
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- Assemblymember Jose Medina (District 61)
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Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian (District 46)
Member, California Legislative Jewish Caucus

Assemblymember Blanca E. Rubio (District 48)
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Senator Steven M. Glazer (District 7)
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Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson (District 19)
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Senator Susan Rubio (District 22)
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Senator Henry Stern (District 27)
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