

## 70 Organizations to California Senate Urging Opposition to AB 101

SENT VIA EMAIL

September 2, 2021

**Re: AB 101 (Medina) – Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement – OPPOSE**

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate,

We are 70 organizational supporters of the California Jewish community, who are deeply concerned about the ethnic studies requirement bill, AB 101, and the enormously harmful impact we believe it will have on Jewish students and the Jewish community if it becomes law. **We strongly urge you to oppose this bill.**

Although AB 101 was recently amended to include language expressing the Legislature’s intent that local educational agencies (LEAs) adopt the state-approved Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) and not adopt an earlier draft of the ESMC that was rejected by the state “due to concerns related to actual or perceived bias, bigotry, and discrimination,” the bill does not, and by law *cannot*, prevent an LEA from adopting the inflammatory, overtly antisemitic first draft of the ESMC. That draft was opposed by 20,000 Californians, virtually every Jewish organization in the state, and the Legislative Jewish Caucus, whose members rightly [warned](#) that such a curriculum would “marginalize Jewish students and fuel hatred and discrimination against the Jewish community.” Governor Newsom, too, was appalled by the antisemitic first draft ESMC and [vowed](#) that it would “never see the light of day,” and SBE President Linda Darling-Hammond [announced](#), “The current draft model curriculum falls short and needs to be substantially redesigned.”

Alarming, however, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the antisemitic first draft of the ESMC -- *or an even more extreme version of it* -- will likely be adopted and implemented by many if not most school districts in the state if AB 101 becomes law.

Soon after the first draft of the ESMC was rejected, its authors launched a petition demanding that education officials reverse their decision and adopt the first draft as the state-mandated curriculum. Signatories on the petition included the California Teachers Association and United Teachers of Los Angeles, a large majority of UC and CSU ethnic studies departments and more than a dozen local school districts.

More recently, the original draft’s authors established the for-profit Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Institute ([LESMC](#)) to further promote the main elements of the rejected first draft and offer school districts their educational expertise in implementing the “liberated” curriculum in their schools.

While the group has yet to publish their final curriculum, several webpages under the heading “Preparing to Teach Palestine: A Toolkit” suggest the “liberated” curriculum will be even more politicized, divisive and antisemitic than even the first draft of the ESMC.

One [webpage](#) smears Israel with false charges of “settler colonialism” and “apartheid” and uses classic antisemitic tropes of Jewish wealth and power to vilify Jewish organizations speaking out about antisemitism; [another](#) encourages teachers to “create a space within your school” to engage in anti-Zionist activism and to fight the “Zionist backlash,” identified as “white supremacy”; and a [third](#) offers “a few resources” that vilify Jewish organizations, promote anti-Zionist groups calling for Israel’s destruction, and [provide](#) “skill-building” and “training” on “how to start your own BDS campaigns.”

Endorsed by the CTA and UTLA as well as by ethnic studies departments and faculty on CSU and UC campuses, the LESMC group has already had success in promoting their “Liberated” curriculum and consulting services throughout the state. For example:

- Hayward Unified [announced](#) its ethnic studies framework will be “informed by and will include...the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.”
- The Santa Cruz County Office of Education [announced](#) a 5-session ethnic studies series for teachers, counselors, and administrators, at which “content will be developed in conjunction with the ... [LESMC](#) and will include lesson planning examples and ideas.”
- The Jefferson Elementary School Board [approved](#) a contract for the consulting services of an educator who is a member of the LESMC faculty.
- Salinas Unified School District [approved](#) a contract with an LESMC member to design its ethnic studies course and provide consulting services.
- The Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is [listed](#) as the sole Ethnic Studies resource on San Francisco Unified School District’s Resources webpage for History/Social Sciences educators.
- The Chair of San Diego Unified School District’s Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee has [described](#) herself as “Lead Author for the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Coalition.”

If AB 101 becomes law, hundreds of districts will have to quickly decide which curriculum to adopt as the basis for the new requirement, and although the bill encourages adoption of the SBE-approved ESMC, the reality is that many, if not most, districts will prefer the highly problematic “Liberated” curriculum because of its overwhelming support from major teachers’ unions and the higher education community, as well as the successful efforts of the LESMC group to create pathways for teacher training and professional development using their antisemitic curriculum.

Especially now, as violent conflict in the Middle East is spilling over into vicious attacks on Jews all over the world, including in [California](#), we believe a bill that facilitates the widespread adoption of an overtly antisemitic curriculum in fulfillment of the mandated graduation requirement directly threatens the safety and well-being of Jewish students and the Jewish community.

The only way to ensure that such a curriculum will not make its way into the majority of schools in the state is if this bill does not pass. **We strongly urge you to vote NO on AB 101.**

Thank you for your leadership in these challenging times, and for ensuring that all California students are provided a non-politicized, non-bigoted quality education that helps them thrive in an ethnically diverse state, and sets them on the path to success.

Sincerely,

Academic Council for Israel  
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA  
Amariah  
AMCHA Initiative  
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists  
American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
American Truth Project  
Americans Fighting Antisemitism  
Americans for Peace and Tolerance  
B'nai B'rith International  
Black Americans for Inclusive Ethnic Studies  
Boston Israel Action Committee  
Bulldogs for Israel (Brooklyn College)  
California Association of Scholars  
Californians for Equal Rights  
CAMERA on Campus  
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore  
Christians and Jews United for Israel  
Club Z  
Coalition for Jewish Values  
Combat Anti-Semitism Movement  
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA)  
Creative Community for Peace  
CUFI on Campus  
Davis Faculty for Israel  
Eagles Wings  
Education Without Indoctrination  
Educators for Quality and Equality  
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)  
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)  
Fight Back Now  
Fuel for Truth  
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors  
Herut North America, U.S. Division  
Hillel of Silicon Valley  
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel  
Iranian American Jewish Federation  
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization

Israel in NYC  
Israel Matters  
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)  
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana (JAACI)  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA  
Latinx for Quality Education  
Magshimey Herut  
Michigan Jewish Action Council  
Middle East Forum  
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)  
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel  
National Jewish Advocacy Center  
North Carolina Coalition for Israel  
Parents Defending Education  
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations  
Rabbinical Alliance of America  
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel  
Russian Jewish Community Foundation  
San Diego Asian Americans for Equality  
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East  
Stop Anti-Semitism Now  
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism  
Students Supporting Israel National  
The Israel Christian Nexus  
The Israel Group  
The Lawfare Project  
The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America  
World Jewish Congress North America  
Young Jewish Conservatives  
Zachor Legal Institute  
Zionist Organization of America