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Holocaust Museum Los Angeles



September 10, 2021

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
California State Assembly
State Capitol Building, Room 4117
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 101 (Medina) - Ethnic Studies Amendments

On behalf of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC), we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the effective leadership and commitment of the California Jewish Legislative Caucus, especially by the Chair, Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, and the Vice-Chair, Scott Weiner and the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Anthony Portantino, for their work in support of necessary amendments to AB 101 (Medina) designed to clarify and strengthen the guardrails in this legislation. AB 101 would make Ethnic Studies a high school graduation requirement in the State of California.

JPAC is the largest single-state advocacy coalition of Jewish organizations in the nation and includes 23 different member organizations. Motivated by Jewish values and comprised of local Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Relations Councils, Jewish Family Service agencies, and numerous other Jewish community organizations, we focus on a broad range of issues affecting the citizens of California and traditional Jewish community concerns. Our coalition of Jewish organizations and community leaders has worked in close partnership with the California Legislative Jewish Caucus to help ensure that diversity and inclusion are celebrated, and that bigotry and discrimination of any form stay out of Ethnic Studies courses and California classrooms.

While AB 101 already included important guardrails against bias and bigotry, the latest amendments further strengthen legal protections against anti-Jewish bias and other forms of discrimination. The recently approved bill requires a public process for the review of the locally developed ethnic studies courses. It states the intent of the Legislature that local educational agencies, including charter schools, consider that "the Instructional Quality Commission undertook a lengthy, thorough, deliberative, and inclusive process before submitting a model curriculum in ethnic studies to the state board." Moreover, the amendments state the Legislature's intent that locally developed ethnic studies courses "not use the portions of the draft model curriculum that the Instructional Quality Commission did not adopt due to concerns related to bias, bigotry, and discrimination." These amendments mandate that the curriculum be "appropriate for use with pupils of all races, religions, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, pupils with disabilities, and English learners."

JPAC appreciates the Assembly and Senate's approval of the critical legal guardrails and protections added to AB 101. We will continue to remain actively engaged with the Jewish Caucus

“to ensure that the implementation and teaching of ethnic studies adhere to the highest educational standards, is free of antisemitism and discriminatory bias, and serves to lift up all of California's diverse ethnic communities.”

Sincerely,



Allison Gingold
Interim Executive Director



Cliff Berg
Legislative Advocate



Lynn Bunim
JPAC Interim Chair

CC: The Honorable Senator Scott Wiener, Vice Chair, California Legislative Jewish Caucus
The Honorable Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Members, California Legislative Jewish Caucus