

VIA EMAIL

March 19, 2025

San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education

To: California Assembly Member David Alvarez

We write to inform that as professional educators, retired and active, we are deeply disappointed in your support for AB 1468 for several reasons. To begin with, the legislation violates a key working principle/ tradition in the education field. This is that only academic experts are those who should have a say in curricular matters. For example, in the California State University System, the system of which you are an alumnus, it's understood and articulated that curricular matters are the province of the faculty, i.e., those who have acquired the training and developed the expertise indispensable to the curriculum. It appears that the origin and the development of AB 1468 have been in the hands of non-academics, and its implementation will be determined in part by non-academics.

Secondly, the legislation represents an iteration and extension of a lengthy campaign against ethnic studies as an academic field worthy of respect and support. As you know, the struggle for ethnic studies has been an ongoing struggle for over fifty years on the part of students, faculty and members of communities that historically have been excluded from the public school curriculum in California. Some of your constituents have been participants in the struggle and champions of ethnic studies. Like us, they continue to act in support of ethnic studies on the basis of an understanding that scholarly studies "confirm," as the National Education Association reported in a study of the value of ethnic studies, "that students who participate in ethnic studies are more academically engaged, develop a sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment, perform better academically, and graduate at higher rates." The NEA investigation was of ethnic studies programs in which academic experts were the crafters of curriculum.

Moreover, it should be understood that ethnic studies is not just a matter of the history and contributions of minoritized communities. It is a field of study in its own right that values knowledge production emanating from the social-historical experiences of peoples previously excluded from dominant curricular models. Most importantly, it is *not* a placeholder for PSA-soundbites of the changing political winds as some of the authors and backers of AB 1468 would believe by inserting

non-academics with clearly outlined political motives into the development of curriculum.

The struggle continues despite a wave of allegations, including allegations that were examined and found to be unsubstantiated by U.S. federal judge Fernando Olguin in the case of Concerned Jewish Parents and Teachers of Los Angeles, et al v Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium et. al. AB 1468 is sadly reminiscent of the racist Arizona legislation, HB 2281, outlawing Chicana & Chicano Studies in the Tucson Unified School District before it was overturned in federal court.

Moreover, while anti-Semitic incidents by right-wing actors have seen an increase since the first Trump administration, the reliance on debunked figures from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) that collapse all pro-Palestinian and anti-genocide protests into figures for antisemitism incidents, really underscores the heavily politicized nature and intent of this current legislation against ethnic studies scholars that rightfully address continuing injustice in this world.

Support for AB 1468 will only sustain the campaign against ethnic studies and confer legitimacy on the campaign to undermine Ethnic Studies. It will enable a return to the days when California students received a censored version of history. That will not serve the interests of students, especially the Latino students who now make up the majority of students in k-12 in California, your constituents, or the interests of the state. Moreover, support for the legislation echoes developments at the national level where we recently witnessed the issuing of an executive order establishing English as the official language of the United States.

For these and other reasons, we urge you to reconsider your support of AB 1468.

Sinceramente,

Isidro Ortiz, Co-Chair, SD Concilio and Professor of Ethnic Studies

Alberto Ochoa, Chair, SD Latinx Education Coalition

Roberto Hernandez, Professor of Ethnic Studies

Patrick Velasquez, Co-Chair, SD Concilio