



JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2021

Contact: Jeremy Russell
Director of Marketing and Communications
jrussell@jcrc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact:

Alissa Kaplan Michaels, West End Strategy Team, amichaels@westendstrategy.com, 917.363.5037

California Jewish Community Broadly Supports Inclusive Ethnic Studies, Says Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel

‘Organized Community Has Coalesced,’ Chair of Jewish Caucus Tells Audience During Online Briefing

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 25 – Fighting racism and bigotry are consistent with the Jewish values that have led California’s Jewish community to broadly support the concept of an inclusive and balanced ethnic studies curriculum, Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, told close to 600 people during an online briefing Wednesday evening.

Gabriel was in conversation with Tyler Gregory, executive director of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Community Relations Council, the central public affairs organization for the region’s Jewish community. They discussed the status and timeline of California’s Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum as the deadline approaches for its approval by the State Board of Education.

JCRC, as part of a statewide coalition of 19 Jewish groups, sponsored the virtual event.

“The organized Jewish community has largely coalesced” around improvements to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, said Gabriel, who represents nearly 500,000 constituents in the West San Fernando Valley.

Gabriel also spoke about the importance of nurturing alliances with other caucuses, such as the California Legislative Black Caucus, the California Latino Legislative Caucus, and the California Asian & Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus, on issues central to Jewish interests and values, including fighting poverty, discrimination and antisemitism.

An initial draft of the model curriculum both excluded Jews and antisemitism, and included anti-Jewish and anti-Israel components. A second version suggested in early August by the state Department of Education removed the most offensive and denigrating content, but did nothing to remedy Jewish exclusion. Nor did it meaningfully define antisemitism beyond notionally including it.

The third and latest version of the curriculum, which contains two lesson plans on the Jewish American experience, is much improved. However, JCRC continues to advocate for a more detailed definition of “antisemitism,” for expanded safeguards to prevent discrimination in the classroom and for the removal of historical figures who have made pernicious statements about Jews and Israelis.

The final version of the model curriculum, whose creation was mandated by legislation passed in 2016, will be determined by the State Board of Education. The latest changes to the educational plan will be made public prior to the board’s March 17-18 meeting; the board has until March 31 to decide on its adoption.

Proposed legislation, Assembly Bill 101, would make the teaching of ethnic studies mandatory in the state’s K-12 public schools.

To stay informed of the latest developments about the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, please visit www.jcrc.org.

About the JCRC

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, one of 125 JCRCs nationwide, brings together and strengthens the Bay Area Jewish community. By building bridges and working in coalition with diverse ethnic, faith, political and civic communities, JCRC is strengthening the pillars of a healthy society that Jews and our neighbors need to thrive, together.

###