



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 30 2020

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 331 without my signature.

This bill would require a course that incorporates ethnic studies as its primary content as a high school graduation requirement starting in the 2029-30 school year.

I value the role ethnic studies plays in helping students think critically about our history and understand the experience of marginalized communities in our state. This academic discipline will help prepare our young adults to become civically engaged and participate fully in our democracy. For these reasons, I already signed AB 1460, which will mandate ethnic studies as a graduation requirement for the California State University system.

I appreciate the amendments the author accepted to ensure that any ethnic studies coursework is free of bias and discrimination. I am also pleased that many more schools and districts have recently joined the hundreds of schools across our state that have adopted ethnic studies courses, and we intend to support these schools with professional development resources.

This bill, however, would require ethnic studies to be taught in high school at a time when there is much uncertainty about the appropriate K-12 model curriculum for ethnic studies. I have been closely monitoring the progress of the development of the K-12 ethnic studies model curriculum. Last year, I expressed concern that the initial draft of the model curriculum was insufficiently balanced and inclusive and needed to be substantially amended. In my opinion, the latest draft, which is currently out for review, still needs revision.

I am directing staff in my Administration to work with State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond to ensure that the draft ethnic studies model curriculum achieves balance, fairness, and is inclusive of all communities.



In California, we don't tolerate our diversity. We celebrate it. That should be reflected in our high school curriculum. I look forward to our model curriculum achieving these goals

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom