



September 8, 2021

Joint Statement on the Final Amendments to AB 101

The five diversity caucuses of the California State Legislature—Latino Caucus, the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, the Black Caucus, the Jewish Caucus and the Native American Caucus—are pleased to unanimously support Assembly Bill 101 (Medina). AB 101 will require high schools to provide ethnic studies starting in academic year 2025-26 and make it a graduation requirement in 2029-2030.

Requiring ethnic studies in high schools is an integral part of cultivating a classroom environment that is accepting of diversity. It is vital for young people to learn about their history, it is also important for them to feel like they can contribute to their communities in positive ways.

This bill comes after decades of struggles and countless efforts by students, teachers, and legislators to diversify curriculum in both K-12 and higher education.

The work that went into designing the final version of AB 101 embodies the very purpose of ethnic studies: the coming together of five diverse caucuses to share their stories, empower one another, and to represent the communities they come from. Understanding the differences among ourselves, and the journeys of those before us enrich our shared mission as legislators to uplift and serve and the State of California. The experiences of the laborers at the Delano Grape Strike, the Japanese Americans who challenged internment, and the civil rights activists who marched on Washington, shape who we are both as people, but also as leaders. Therefore, they will shape our students. Our students need to hear these stories because they are theirs.

We are proud of the work that went into this legislation. We are proud of the students who came to us and demanded reform. Mainly, we are honored to serve California at a time when we can welcome such a historic change.

“At its core ethnic studies is about unity and is a key step in combating racism and hate. That is why the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus proudly made it one of our legislative priorities and continue to support AB 101 with the recent amendments. These amendments were agreed upon by all the ethnic caucuses and are an example of unity and understanding that we hope to teach once AB 101 has passed. We applaud the author, Assemblymember Medina, for being a long-time leader on this issue and for working with our caucuses to ensure that all underserved communities feel represented,” **Senator Richard Pan and Assemblymember Evan Low, Chair and Vice Chair of the API Legislative Caucus**

“As Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, I am proud to stand with Assemblymember Medina in support of the amendments to AB 101, which creates a stronger ethnic studies program and a better process for implementing it. Considering the long history of subjugation and injustices that communities of color have faced in this nation and state, and the battles that communities of color, like the Black community, have waged to fight for their rights and dignity, and considering that today’s racial and political climate indicate that we are not entirely comfortable with our past and the truths they hold, it is critical that ethnic studies be immediately included immediately as a graduation requirement to help reduce further racial bias and create understanding. History is often taught with oppression and racism in the periphery or sometimes erased altogether. It is imperative that all students leave our education system with a deeper understanding of the communities that make California and America culturally diverse and strong.”

Senator Steven Bradford and Senator Sidney Kamlager, Chair and Vice Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus

“The Jewish Caucus is pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 101. This legislation enjoys broad support in the Legislature and is a top priority for our allies in the Latino, Black, Asian Pacific Islander (API), and Native American Legislative Caucuses. It is our sincere hope that this course will provide an opportunity for young Californians to deepen their understanding of our society’s complex history when it comes to issues of race and diversity, and we would like to recognize Assemblymember Jose Medina for his persistent leadership on this important issue. We are also grateful that AB 101 includes firm guardrails that address concerns raised by the Jewish community and leave no doubt that hate and bigotry against Jews, Israelis, or any other community is prohibited by law and cannot be taught in our classrooms.” **Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel and Senator Scott Wiener, Chair and Vice Chair of the Jewish Legislative Caucus**

“Incorporating an ethnic studies curriculum in California’s high schools has been a priority for the Latino Caucus for years. Now, more than ever, our increasingly diverse student population needs to learn about and be exposed to the many cultures, practices and histories that make up our state’s rich tapestry. AB 101 is the product of extraordinary collaboration and much input from students, parents and education leaders. In unity with our partners in all legislative caucuses, the Latino Caucus is pleased to support this groundbreaking and historic legislation.” **Senator María Elena Durazo and Assemblymember Robert Rivas, Chair and Vice Chair of the Latino Legislative Caucus**

“The Native American Caucus is proud to join with Assemblymember Medina and all the legislative caucuses to support and champion AB 101 which will foster greater knowledge about the various ethnicities, which contribute to California’s great diversity. AB 101 will also provide an opportunity for students to learn of the challenges each community has faced and overcome as well as their contributions to our state and nation.” **Assemblymember James C. Ramos, Chair, California Native American Caucus**