

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

February 23, 2006

Ms. Glee Johnson, President
State Board of Education
1430 N Street, Room 5111
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Johnson:

We write to bring to your attention efforts of non-academic groups to modify California's 6th grade history-social science textbooks relating to the history of India. Many of these proposed edits were adopted by the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission on December 2, 2005 despite concerns about their historical accuracy by the Commission's own academic experts and forty-seven internationally renowned scholars of Ancient India.

One example of the proposed changes is the suggested replacement of the following text on page 245 in the Glencoe/McGraw Hill textbook:

The original text states, "*Men had many more rights than women. Unless there were no sons in a family, only a man could inherit property. Only men could go to school or become priests.*"


The recommended edit is, "*Men had different rights and duties than women,*" and add after last sentence, "*Women's education was mostly done at home.*"

Revisionist history is a slippery slope. These proposed edits stray from academic facts in order to sanitize and oversimplify caste and gender inequalities in ancient and present-day India. Beyond the literal academic flaws, a non-academic group's success at convincing the Curriculum Commission of the need to modify California's curriculum is problematic.

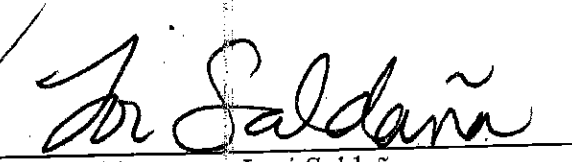
It is of the utmost importance for us to embrace diversity and cultural awareness in California by presenting our students with historically accurate information. California's educational system should foster a supportive environment for the development of ideologies, opinions, and intellectual questioning and growth around the facts—even if they are unpleasant. Sanitation of history silences a large number of people's struggles against injustice and oppression.

We, the undersigned members of the California State Legislature, ask you to reject curriculum modifications that are not based on historically accurate and objective scholarship, and that are not religiously neutral.

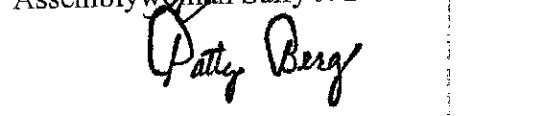
Sincerely,



Assemblywoman Sally J. Lieber



Assemblywoman Lori Saldaña



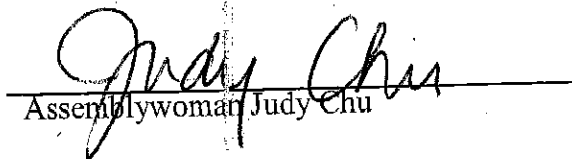
Assemblywoman Patty Berg



Assemblywoman Loni Hancock



Assemblywoman Carol Liu



Assemblywoman Judy Chu



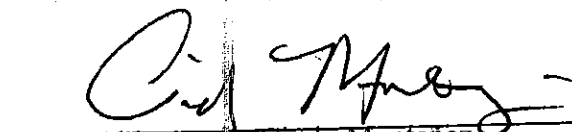
Assemblywoman Wilma Chan



Assemblywoman Karen Bass



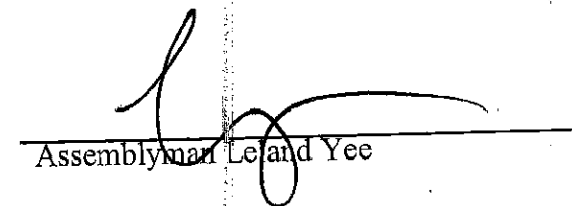
Assemblywoman Noreen Evans



Assemblywoman Cindy Montanez



Senator Gloria Romero



Assemblyman Leland Yee

Elaine K. Alquist

Senator Elaine Alquist

Sheila Kuehl

Senator Sheila Kuehl

Barbara S. Matthews

Assemblywoman Barbara Matthews

Jackie Speier

Senator Jackie Speier

Alberto Torrico

Assemblyman Alberto Torrico

cc: Members, California State Board of Education
Honorable Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent
Mr. Tom Adams, Executive Director, Curriculum Commission