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CEA Statement on Critical Race Theory Class in Carlsbad Unified

Carlsbad, March 8, 2023 – Tonight the Carlsbad Unified School District (CUSD) Board of Trustees will again consider approving a controversial new curriculum entitled “Film Academy Ethnic Studies,” a course rejected last month for proposing to teach students about “repressive state apparatuses” which promote the “white Eurocentric dominant culture in America.” With considerable parent and community outrage, and now the interference of a Carlsbad City Council Member into the business of the school district, tonight’s meeting was moved to a larger venue and is expected to be contentious.

The “dominant/oppressed” concepts and references to “institutional racism” are part of Critical Race Theory (CRT), the widely rejected effort to rewrite American history as a country founded on white supremacy, slavery and imperialist efforts to oppress minorities. The concept of “systemic” or “institutional” racism, which is retained in the revised Ethnic Studies curriculum, teaches that the institutions of America – whether law enforcement, education or the justice system – are inherently racist by design and must therefore be abolished (similarly to the calls to abolish the police).

The discussion over the Ethnic Studies course has now been further inflamed by continued misrepresentations about the course and those opposed to the racist teachings of CRT. This now apparently includes Carlsbad City Council Member Priya Bhat-Patel, who supposedly emailed supporters to claim the CUSD Board “pandered to the demands of white supremacy” and an “anti-diversity push from a small group of parents,” despite opposition at the meeting from minorities and organizations like the Californians for Equal Rights Foundation.

Council Member Bhat-Patel’s comments were inflammatory, inaccurate and inappropriate for an elected official with no knowledge of the issue. CUSD Trustees previously rejected requests by Trustee Rallings to implement CRT into its curriculum, and affirmed to the public that it is not being used in CUSD. That will change if the CRT-based Ethnic Studies curriculum is approved.

CEA supports the teaching of Constructive Ethnic Studies as intended by the California Legislature – without labeling children as “oppressors” of their minority classmates based on the color of their skin. CRT contradicts the primary goal of Ethnic Studies, which is to build understanding and appreciation of the contribution of minority cultures. Its inclusion in any curriculum will only serve to further divide our Carlsbad community and our schools.