

Steve Farmer, Ph.D. [saf@safarmer.com](mailto:saf@safarmer.com) 9 March 2006

The following letter opposing sectarian edits in the California textbook case was sent by 17 powerful members of the California Legislature on 23 February 2006 to the Members of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Department of Education, and the Executive Director of the California Curriculum Committee.

The letter was publicly released before the final Board of Education Meeting on the textbooks, on 8 March 2006, which resulted in the full Board's rejection of the December 2, 2006 edits of the California textbooks (noted in the letter), which included a long series of ideological edits inspired by Hindu sectarian groups.

The signatures were gathered by the [Friends of South Asia \(FOSA\)](#) and the [Coalition against Communalism \(CAC\)](#), which played major parts in the battle against Hindu nationalist groups in the California textbook case.

**Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero, Senate Education Committee**

**Senator Elaine Alquist, Senate Education Committee**

**Senator Jackie Speier, Education Committee**

**Senator Sheila Kuehl**

**Assemblywoman Judy Chu, Co-Chair, Asian Pacific Islander (API) Caucus**

**Assemblyman Leland Lee, Co-Chair, API Caucus**

**Assemblywoman Patty Berg, Vice-Chair of the Women's Caucus**

**Assemblywoman Loni Hancock, Assembly Education Committee**

**Assemblywoman Carol Liu, Assembly Education Committee**

**Assemblywoman Barbara Matthews**

**Assemblywoman Cindy Montenez**

**Assemblywoman Sally Lieber**

**Assemblywoman Lori Saldana**

**Assemblywoman Wilma Chan**

**Assemblywoman Karen Bass**

**Assemblywoman Noreen Evans**

**Assemblyman Alberto Torrico**

## 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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."*

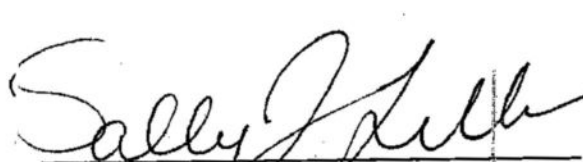
The recommended edit is, *"Men had different rights and duties than women,"* and add after last sentence, *"Women's education was mostly done at home."*

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,

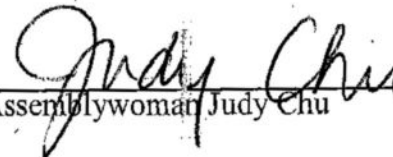
  
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Assemblywoman Sally J. Lieber

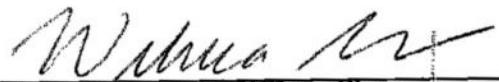
  
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Assemblywoman Lori Saldaña

  
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Assemblywoman Judy Chu

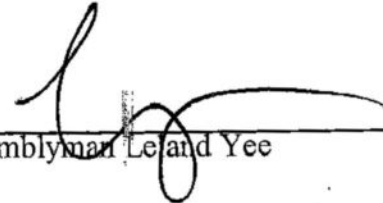
  
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Assemblywoman Wilma Chan

  
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Assemblywoman Karen Bass

  
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Assemblywoman Noreen Evans

  
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Assemblywoman Cindy Montañez

  
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Senator Gloria Romero

  
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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