

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2023

Lester W. Young Jr.
Chancellor
New York State Education Building
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Chancellor Young Jr.,

I am writing to express concerns about a Regents exam that perpetuates denial, distortion, and disinformation regarding the creation of Israel and the expansion of its borders. The exam features several maps of Israel's changing borders without mentioning the critical context in which those changes arose: as a consequence of defensive, rather than aggressive, wars.

The topic of Israel is so often riddled with widespread misunderstanding and willful misrepresentation that the Board of Regents should take care to approach subject with the utmost academic rigor. Education done sloppily descends into miseducation.

Beneath the map itself is a seemingly innocuous but insidious question portraying the State of Israel as a response to the Holocaust, essentially ignoring Zionism as a national movement that long predates the Holocaust. The implication that Jewish self-determination has no rationale apart from the Holocaust is as ahistorical as it is offensive; it belongs nowhere on a Regents exam.

I respectfully ask that the Board of Regents convene a meeting with institutional leaders in the Jewish Community in order to confront its own role in miseducating students about the historical origins and development of Israel as a Jewish state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ritchie Torres", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress