



**Asian American
Center of Frederick**
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Written Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 304
Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 3, 2022 1:00 PM ET

Presented to: Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman

By: Elizabeth Chung, Executive Director - Asian American Center of Frederick

FAVORABLE

Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to equip our community with essential skills and knowledge to be self-sufficient and independent. AACF urges a favorable report on SB 304, which would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum for units of instruction on Asian American history in public schools in Maryland. This bill would lead to the development of a statewide curriculum that better reflects Asian American experiences and contributions, in Maryland and our region, while allowing local boards to determine the amount of instruction and implementation of these standards.

Unfortunately, there are numerous examples of anti-Asian hate in our country's history. We also experience Anti-Asian hate in our Frederick public schools. Education can be an effective and important tool to combat the racism that fuels this hate and misunderstanding. It is important to diversify and update our educational curriculum to better reflect various contributions and experiences of groups who have not been fully represented in the past. The contributions of Asians to American history are taught incompletely, if at all, throughout our state's schools. SB 304 seeks to address this problem by ensuring that a unit of Asian American history is taught at least once during elementary, middle and high school.

As a result of COVID-19-related fears and misinformation, the country has seen an increase in anti-Asian bullying in schools across the country. SB 304 provides a pathway to raise the voices of individuals and communities that have not been fully heard in the past, and show that those lives and histories matter. The addition of Asian American history to the curriculum is critical to change discriminatory perceptions that persist in our country. This bill gives the students of Maryland a chance to appreciate a more complete history of our state and nation, which includes the contributions and struggles of Asian Americans.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 304. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Chung

Elizabeth Chung,
Executive Director