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Madame Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkens and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am the first Asian American elected to the Board of Education, Montgomery County Public Schools serving from 1990 to 1998 and also the first Chinese American ever elected to a public office in the State of Maryland.

Our world has become more multi-polar as we witness the rise and expansion of BRICS countries. China and India in BRICS represents of one-third of the world's population. Professor Kishore Mahbubani, former Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the University of Singapore and President of the United Nations Security Council and author of the book, The Asian 21st Century describes the rise the rise of China, India and ASEAN countries in the Pacific Rim. It is extremely important for our next generations of students and Americans to have a better knowledge and understanding of Asian culture, languages and history.

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for HB1363. As an AAPI community leader, I believe that integrating AAPI history, culture, and contributions into our state K-12 curriculum is both necessary and beneficial for our students and society as a whole. Our political and community leaders often talk about diversity and I believe that actions are more important than words.

Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority group in the United States and make up over 8% of our state population. In counties like Howard County, and Montgomery County, our population is 22% and

17.5% respectively. Yet, despite these significant demographic proportions, our educational system has often overlooked the narratives, histories, and achievements of AAPI individuals and communities. By incorporating AAPI curriculum into our schools through state legislation, we ensure the material is taught in a comprehensive and meaningful manner and students are presented with an accurate understanding of our nation's diverse heritage. Too often, AAPI students feel marginalized or invisible in the classroom due to the lack of representation in the curriculum. Studies have shown that students perform better academically when they see themselves represented in the curriculum and feel a connection to what they are learning. By providing all students with access to diverse perspectives and narratives, we can create a more inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued and empowered to succeed.

The addition of Asian American and Pacific Islander histories is critical to teaching a comprehensive curriculum in our state and integral to teaching accurate American history.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alan Cheung