

Committees: Ways and Means

Testimony on: HB1363 Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement

Position: Favorable

28 February 2024

Madam Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Cleo Burton and I support House Bill 1363

As a Chinese American adoptee, I bring a unique lived experience to the inclusion of AAPI curriculum into Maryland K-12 classrooms.

I believe this bill is a crucial step towards fostering inclusivity, understanding, and appreciation for the diverse experiences of Asian Americans in our society and history. Moreover, as a Chinese American adoptee, this bill holds personal significance for me. It validates my own heritage and identity, while also providing a platform for other Asian American adoptees to explore and connect with their cultural roots. Education is not just about academic achievement; it's about fostering empathy, understanding, and respect for one another's stories and experiences. By incorporating Asian American history into the curriculum, we equip our future generations with the knowledge and empathy necessary to build a more inclusive and equitable society.

Growing up as a Chinese American adoptee, I faced a unique journey of identity exploration. While my cultural heritage is Chinese, my upbringing in America presented me with a blend of cultures and perspectives. However, throughout my education, I often found a significant gap in the representation of Asian American history and contributions in our curriculum.

By mandating the inclusion of Asian American history in Maryland's curriculum, House Bill 1363 not only acknowledges the rich tapestry of Asian American experiences but also validates the presence and significance of Asian Americans in shaping our nation's history. This legislation ensures that students, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to learn about the struggles, triumphs, and contributions of Asian Americans throughout history.

I respectfully urge the committee to support Maryland House Bill 1363. Let us seize this opportunity to celebrate the diversity of our nation and ensure that the stories and contributions of Asian Americans are rightfully recognized and honored in our classrooms. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Thank you,
Cleo Burton

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