

Committees: Ways and Means

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

Position: Favorable

26 February 2024

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and the members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to offer my full support for HB1363, which aims to integrate Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) curriculum into Maryland classrooms. As a white ally committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in education, I believe that incorporating AAPI studies is crucial for fostering a more comprehensive understanding of our nation's history and promoting social justice.

Maryland, like the rest of the United States, is home to a diverse population with significant contributions from AAPI communities. However, our educational system often fails to adequately represent the experiences and achievements of these communities, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and biases. HB1363 presents an opportunity to address these shortcomings and provide students with a more accurate and inclusive portrayal of American history.

By including AAPI curriculum in classrooms, students will gain valuable insights into the rich cultural heritage, struggles, and triumphs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. They will learn about the contributions of AAPI individuals to various aspects of American life, including politics, science, arts, and literature. This knowledge is essential for cultivating empathy, respect, and appreciation for the diverse tapestry of our society.

Moreover, integrating AAPI studies into the curriculum is critical for combating prejudice and discrimination. By learning about the experiences of AAPI communities, students will develop a greater awareness of the challenges they face and the importance of standing in solidarity against racism and bigotry. This is particularly important in today's increasingly diverse and interconnected world, where understanding and empathy are essential for building inclusive communities.

As a white ally, I recognize the importance of using my privilege to advocate for marginalized communities and amplify their voices. Supporting HB1363 is a tangible way to demonstrate solidarity with AAPI communities and work towards creating a more just and equitable society for all. By ensuring that all students have access to a curriculum that reflects the diversity of our nation, we can lay the foundation for a future built on mutual respect, understanding, and unity.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB1363 and take a stand for inclusivity and equity in Maryland's education system. By embracing diversity and celebrating the contributions of AAPI communities, we can create a brighter and more inclusive future for all Marylanders.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Maddie Richard