

**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 write to you today with an impassioned plea: It is high time we acknowledge the invaluable contributions, rich heritage, and diverse experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in our nation, particularly in the vibrant tapestry of Maryland.

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.

I am a government employee who benefits from yearly cultural sensitivity and anti-bias training. While this is very beneficial for me and my colleagues, this type of education needs to start at an earlier age. What we learn in these training sessions should be a review of past classroom experiences, not completely new concepts.

I urge you to heed the call for inclusivity and equity in education. By embracing API curriculum in our K-12 classrooms, we not only honor the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders but also enrich the educational experience for all students. Let us pave the way for a future where every child feels a sense of belonging and pride in their heritage, regardless of their background. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1363.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Jay Chen, MD