

Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1363
Education - Public Schools – Asian American History Curriculum Requirement
Ways and Means Committee
By: Grace Chen
FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Grace Chen and I am a 11th grader at Marriotts Ridge High School in Howard County. Apart from that, I am also a member of Howard County Chinese School AAPI Youth Ambassadors Program. I am writing this testimony in support of the House Bill HB-1363 titled “Education – Public Schools – Asian American History Curriculum Requirement.”

I urge a favorable report on HB-1363, 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, both in Maryland and our Mid-Atlantic region. It will also allow local boards to determine how they want to implement these standards.

When I was in 6th grade, I took Spanish for my world language credit. In Spanish class, my classmates and I were learning how to express what we like and do not like. The other students started saying “me gusta comer perro,” which translates to “I like to eat dogs.” This hurt my feelings deeply, but unfortunately, I wasn’t able to stand up for myself against the other 11-year-olds. None of my other Asian friends in my class could say anything either, and the teacher didn’t even mention it as well.

Sad, but true, there is not much knowledge about Asian-American history that is currently taught in school. Specifically, in regards to content about the contributions of Asian-Americans to our country. This infrequent exposure results in biased opinions and stereotypes that do not define Asian people at all. This infrequent exposure hurts students in unimaginable ways.

Asian Americans are Americans. Just like everyone else. The contributions of Asians to American history are not taught to the extent they should be. Learning about Asian American history would be an easy solution to such a devastating problem that is still prevalent today, and HB-1363 seeks to address this problem.

Had the students in my Spanish class known more about Asian American history, they would not have said such words. Had the students in my Spanish class known more about Asian American history, I would not have to carry that memory with me. Had the students in my Spanish class known more about Asian American history, we all would have been a bit more appreciative and respectful of the people around us.

I strongly support adding the contribution of Asian Americans’ and other culture groups’ in our social studies curriculum. Equipped with a broad range of knowledge as well as being well-educated, our young generation will be able to understand yet appreciate the histories and cultures around the world. Once we grasp this knowledge, we can fully and finally respect each other, appreciate each other, reunite and stand strong to move our nation towards a better future.

In summary, I sincerely support this bill and urge a favorable report on SB-304. I look forward for your decision.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Grace Chen