

**Committees:** Ways and Means

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

**Position:** Favorable

28 February 2024

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

My name is Niko Brown and I support House Bill 1363 which would require the Maryland State Board of Education to develop and mandate Asian American history in our schools' K-12 curriculum.

Being Asian and growing up in the United States, I have felt that there lacks a deeper unified understanding of the Asian-American experience that I have seen many of my peers struggle through. Although I do not personally believe that I have the sufficient experience and a relative upbringing to identify as Asian-American, I know that it is important to recognize that the Asian American experience is indeed American, and something that should be explored and taught more to students during their developmental ages in order to widen their understanding of the diversity of the country they grow up in and will most likely represent in the future.

It is vital that our students learn about the past of all of our American people. The teaching of US history is not complete without the inclusion of the Asian Americans that helped build this country into what it is today. Without the inclusion of Asian American studies in school curriculums, Maryland students grow up unknowing of the many contributions that Asian Americans have had on our country, including their involvement with the advancement of Civil Rights. Students also fail to learn about many important historical events, such as the internment of Japanese Americans, the massacre of Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles, and the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Four other states--Illinois, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island--have already mandated Asian American Studies for K-12 schools. I believe it is our time to do so too.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1363.

Thank you,

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