

**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 Safora Noor 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.

At my high school in Baltimore county, I wish I had noticed that whenever I entered a history classroom, the history that was being taught was the same every time, with emphasis on people like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Throughout my elementary and middle school years, I believed that knowing about such historical figures, learning about the Civil Rights movement and the American Revolution was all there was to American history. However, I had learned outside the classroom that much of the history was missing from classrooms. History that included and explained the formation of the Asian American identity was (and still is) non-existent in every single one of my History classes. The only Asian American history I learned about was Japanese Internment camps. That one event does not sum up the pivotal role that Asian Americans played in American history. And as a result, many Asian American students including myself that go to a Maryland school feel left out and invisible in a space that should represent our experiences in this country.

It is vital that 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 like myself, 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 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,

*Safora Noor*

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