

**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 express my strong support for HB1363, which seeks to include Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) curriculum in Maryland classrooms. As a South Asian activist deeply engaged in our community's educational advancement, I believe that integrating AAPI studies into the curriculum is not only necessary but also profoundly beneficial for our students and society at large.

Maryland boasts a rich cultural tapestry, with a significant portion of its population comprising individuals of Asian descent, including South Asians like myself. Despite our growing presence and contributions, our history, struggles, and achievements have often been overlooked or marginalized in mainstream education. This omission perpetuates ignorance and reinforces harmful stereotypes, hindering the development of inclusive and empathetic citizens.

HB1363 represents a pivotal opportunity to rectify these historical oversights and foster a more comprehensive understanding of American history and society. By incorporating AAPI curriculum into classrooms, students will gain insights into the diverse experiences, cultures, and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders throughout history. They will learn about the resilience of AAPI communities in the face of adversity, their pivotal roles in shaping American society, and the ongoing fight for social justice and equality.

Moreover, including AAPI studies in the curriculum is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and pride among AAPI students. Seeing themselves reflected in their educational materials validates their identities and experiences, empowering them to embrace their heritage and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, incorporating AAPI curriculum aligns with Maryland's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. By providing students with a more nuanced understanding of our nation's history and multicultural identity, we can cultivate a generation of compassionate and informed individuals who are equipped to navigate our increasingly diverse world.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB1363 and take a bold step towards building a more inclusive and equitable education system in Maryland. By acknowledging the contributions and experiences of AAPI communities, we can create a more just and empathetic society for all.

Sincerely,

Nista Patel