

**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 Ella Wan 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 middle school in Montgomery County, I wish there was an opportunity for Asian Americans to be represented. As an Asian American myself, I've personally experienced an incredible sense of misrepresentation within our educational curriculum. Many aspects of Asian American history involve struggles against discrimination, racism, and injustice. Ignoring these negative perspectives of such a huge part of our history leaves me and many others feeling excluded and undervalued.

It is vital that our students learn about the past of all American people. The teaching of US history is not complete without the inclusion of the Asian Americans who helped build this country into what it is today. Without the incorporation of Asian American studies in school curriculums, Maryland students grow up unaware of the many contributions that Asian Americans have had to 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. Incorporating Asian American history prepares students to engage with diverse perspectives and navigate global challenges, contributing to their overall cultural competency. 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,

Ella Wan

Neelsville Middle School

Montgomery County

ellamwan@gmail.com