

**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,

My name is Lian Peach, 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.

As an adopted Asian American, I have found it difficult to connect to my Asian culture and history. I had hoped that one way I could connect to that part of my identity is through Asian and Asian American history instruction. However, my instruction on these topics was severely limited and surface level, oversimplifying and delegitimizing the full scope of challenges, struggles, and also accomplishments of the Asian American diaspora. Therefore, I was forced to turn to other organizations outside of school in order to connect to my Asian culture and learn about Asian and Asian American history. While I am grateful for these organizations, Asian American history instruction should simply be a given in K-12 public school curriculum.

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. Even if curriculums include these prominent events, this is often where the Asian American history instruction stops, as they typically gloss over the many other struggles and accomplishments of Asian Americans., simplifying the Asian American experience. The Asian American diaspora is large and diverse, and this is not adequately represented in the current Asian American history instruction in K-12 public schools. Hopefully, inclusion of this curriculum can lead to better understanding and more acceptance between cultures, mitigating and minimizing hate and discrimination from an early age.

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,

***Lian Peach*** (*she/her*)

*Dear Asian Youth*

*Salisbury University*

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