

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 write to you today as a community leader representing the United Chinese Americans (UCA), a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and advocating for the well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) across the United States. It is with great urgency and conviction that I express our full support for HB1363, which calls for the inclusion of AAPI curriculum in Maryland K-12 schools.

As an organization deeply committed to fostering understanding, inclusion, and celebration of AAPI heritage, we believe that the integration of AAPI curriculum into Maryland's K-12 education system is not just desirable, but imperative. The AAPI community has played a significant role in shaping the social, cultural, and economic fabric of this nation, yet their contributions and experiences remain largely overlooked in mainstream education.

The absence of AAPI representation in school curricula perpetuates a harmful cycle of erasure and marginalization, depriving students of the opportunity to learn about the diverse histories, cultures, and struggles of AAPI communities. This lack of representation not only diminishes the educational experience of AAPI students but also contributes to the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and biases among all students.

By passing HB1363 and mandating the inclusion of AAPI curriculum in Maryland K-12 schools, the General Assembly has the power to rectify this historical oversight and ensure that all students have access to a more inclusive and accurate education. AAPI curriculum will not only provide AAPI students with a sense of pride and validation in their identities but will also foster greater empathy, understanding, and appreciation for diversity among all students.

Moreover, the inclusion of AAPI curriculum aligns with Maryland's commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and social justice in education. As a state known for its cultural diversity and vibrant AAPI communities, Maryland has a unique opportunity to lead the nation in advancing inclusive education practices that reflect the rich tapestry of our society.

I urge the members of the Maryland General Assembly to support HB1363 and take a bold stand for inclusivity, diversity, and equity in education. By integrating AAPI curriculum into Maryland's K-12 schools, we can empower students to become informed, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens who are equipped to thrive in our increasingly diverse world.

Sincerely,
Hong Qi