

**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 Khin Rupa Maung, an immigrant from Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, and I am a mother of three children who were born and raised in the United States. I serve as an AAPI Commissioner of Howard County since March 2023. I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for HB1363, which aims to integrate Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) curriculum into Maryland's educational system. As a Burmese immigrant who serves the Burmese refugee population in the healthcare sector, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that cultural representation and education can have on individuals and communities.

My journey to the United States was not without its challenges, but through perseverance and the support of compassionate individuals, I was able to establish myself in this country. I am now privileged to work as a healthcare professional, providing essential care and support to fellow Burmese immigrants and refugees who have faced unimaginable hardships.

The Burmese community in Maryland, like many AAPI communities, has a rich cultural heritage and a wealth of knowledge and traditions that deserve recognition and celebration. However, our history and experiences are often overlooked or marginalized in mainstream education. HB1363 presents a crucial opportunity to address this oversight and ensure that the stories and contributions of AAPI individuals, including those from Burma, are integrated into Maryland's curriculum.

By incorporating AAPI curriculum into schools, we can foster greater understanding, empathy, and respect among students of all backgrounds. This not only benefits AAPI students who will see themselves reflected in their education but also cultivates a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students. Moreover, it equips future generations with the cultural competence necessary to navigate an increasingly diverse society and workforce.

For Burmese immigrants and refugees, in particular, access to culturally relevant education can be transformative. It validates our identities, instills pride in our heritage, and empowers us to navigate and contribute to our adopted communities. Furthermore, it helps bridge the gap between generations, as younger Burmese Americans gain a deeper understanding of their roots and elders feel valued and respected.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB1363 and take a significant step towards recognizing and honoring the diverse experiences and contributions of AAPI communities, including the Burmese community, in Maryland. By doing so, we not only enrich the educational experiences of our students but also promote social cohesion, equity, and inclusion for all Marylanders.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Khin Rupa Maung, M.D.