

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 Daffa Warsa 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 high school/middle school in Fairfax County, I was surrounded by a diverse community that included many of Asian American descent. Due to this, my school often recognized the culture of Asian Americans in the school's culture in events such as spirit weeks and cultural bowls. However, I noticed that the Asian American history itself was often absent in studies of the development of our country. As important as it is to celebrate the current culture of Asian Americans throughout the country, I believe it is equally important to learn about Asian American history so that students can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for it.

It is vital that 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 who helped build this country into what it is today. Without the inclusion 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.

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,

Daffa W

George Washington University

Washington DC

daffawarsa@gmail.com