

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 Oorja Munot, Vice President of the Asian American Progressive Student Union 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.

The absence of Asian American studies results in a gap in our students' knowledge, leaving them unaware of the profound impact Asian Americans have had on the development of our country, including their contributions to 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.

In addition to the cultural enrichment that Asian American history would bring to our classrooms, it's essential to acknowledge the broader societal benefits. The inclusion of diverse perspectives fosters understanding, empathy, and tolerance among students, preparing them to navigate an increasingly multicultural world. Exposure to the struggles and triumphs of Asian Americans in shaping the United States not only instills pride in our collective heritage but also cultivates a sense of unity among students. By embracing the diversity within our history, we equip students with the tools they need to contribute positively to our society.

Four other states--Illinois, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island--have already mandated Asian American Studies for K-12 schools. I believe it is time that we take action to support the future of our students.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1363.

Thank you,

Oorja Munot

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