

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 writing to offer my enthusiastic support for HB1363, which aims to integrate Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) curriculum into Maryland's K-12 education system. As a recent resident who moved to the Montgomery County district with the intention of starting a family and raising children, I deeply understand the importance of ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive education for all students.

Having grown up in a culturally diverse environment myself, I recognize the immense value in learning about various cultures, histories, and perspectives from a young age. However, I've noticed a significant gap in the representation of AAPI contributions and experiences within our educational curriculum. This oversight not only does a disservice to AAPI students who deserve to see themselves reflected in their studies but also deprives all students of the opportunity to develop a well-rounded understanding of our nation's rich tapestry of cultures.

Adopting AAPI curriculum into Maryland's K-12 education system is a crucial step towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. By incorporating the histories, achievements, and contributions of AAPI communities into the curriculum, we can provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of American history and society. This, in turn, helps promote empathy, respect, and appreciation for diversity among students of all backgrounds.

Moreover, as someone who has chosen to raise a family in this district, I believe that HB1363 aligns with our shared values of inclusivity and diversity. By embracing AAPI curriculum, we demonstrate our commitment to providing every student with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

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.

Sincerely,

Ted Chen

