



OCA GREATER WASHINGTON, DC – Asian Pacific American Advocates
EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

Committees: Ways and Means

Testimony on: HB1323 Education – Public Schools – Asian American History Teacher Professional Development and Resources

Committees: Ways and Means

Position: Favorable

3 March 2025

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and the members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Hoang-Viet Tran and I am representing OCA-DC to write and express our strong support for Maryland HB1323, which seeks to enhance professional development opportunities for educators by incorporating Asian American history training programs into the state's Continuing Professional Education Development program. This initiative is a crucial step toward ensuring that Maryland's educators have access to high-quality, vetted resources that will enrich the curriculum and provide students with a more inclusive and accurate understanding of American history.

During my work in community outreach, I have personally volunteered at numerous elementary and high schools across Maryland, where I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact of cultural representation on AANHPI students. When these students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, there is a visible transformation in their engagement and sense of belonging. Students who participated in optional programming to learn about their heritage and the diverse cultures within the AANHPI community demonstrated remarkable ability to thoughtfully engage with complex cultural concepts and develop genuine empathy for others. These experiences have equipped them with invaluable perspective that prepares them to become more effective community leaders. Equally important, I have observed how non-AANHPI students who are exposed to this curriculum develop greater cultural understanding, becoming strong allies and supporters in this space. This cross-cultural empathy is essential for fostering the inclusive society we aspire to build in Maryland.

It is vital that our 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 that helped build this country into what it is today. Without the inclusion of Asian American studies in school curriculums, Maryland students grow up unknowing of the many contributions that Asian Americans have had on 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.

Studies show that a diverse and inclusive curriculum leads to higher student engagement, improved academic outcomes, and a greater sense of belonging for students from all backgrounds. By investing in educator training, we can ensure that future generations develop a broader, more accurate understanding of our nation's diverse history.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1323. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,
Hoang-Viet Tran
justtran@gwu.edu
OCA-DC VP of Membership