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ADVOCATE
GREATER WASHINGTON DC

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

Position: Favorable

RE: Support for Maryland HB1323 – Education – Public Schools – Asian American History Professional Development and Library Materials

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I write to express my strong support for HB1323, which seeks to enhance teacher professional development and expand access to instructional materials on Asian American history in Maryland's K-12 public schools. This legislation ensures that the Maryland State Department of Education will evaluate and publicize high-quality Asian American history training programs for inclusion in the state's Continuing Professional Development Program. Additionally, it establishes the Asian American History Grant Program to provide funding for educators and school libraries to obtain essential resources on Asian American and Pacific Islander history.

Asian Americans have played an integral role in shaping our nation, contributing significantly to civil rights movements, scientific advancements, and the arts. Yet, critical historical events—such as the formation of early Asian American labor unions in the 20th century, the advocacy of South Asian American leaders during the Civil Rights Movement, and the forced migration and resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees following the Vietnam War—remain underrepresented in mainstream curricula. HB1323 addresses this gap by supporting professional development programs offered by organizations such as the Smithsonian Institution, The Asian American Education Project, Teach AAPI, the Sikh Coalition, and others, ensuring that educators receive training grounded in rigorous scholarship and best practices.

Further, the establishment of the Asian American History Grant Program will provide grants of up to \$2,000 for educators to obtain professional development points and up to \$1,000 per year for school libraries to purchase age-appropriate materials on Asian American and Pacific Islander history. By securing dedicated funding for these initiatives, HB1323 makes a long-term investment in fostering an inclusive and historically accurate curriculum.

I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can collaborate on advancing this critical initiative. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Siddarth Sharma
Vice President, Membership
OCA-DC