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of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Ways & Means Committee
March 5, 2025**

HB1323: UNFAVORABLE

Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement** as a curriculum mandate.

HB1323 requires the Maryland State Board of Education to develop content standards for a unit of instruction on Asian American history, which must include the events of Asian American history, their history in Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region, contributions of Asian Americans including their role in the advancement of civil rights, accomplishments in government, the arts, humanities and science, and contributions as a community to the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the US. Beginning school year 2026-2027, local boards must incorporate a unit in all schools, to be taught at least once in elementary, middle, and a high school course required for graduation. School systems may use an online course to satisfy requirements. The local superintendent must ensure compliance.

While HB1323 allows for content experts to develop standards instead of dictating recommendations or specific units of instruction through legislation, the recent State framework for most social studies grades and courses were published in 2020 and include contributions for multiple groups including Asian American and Pacific Islanders. At the secondary level in Howard County, Asian American and Pacific Islander history is explored in Geography, U.S. History including through student investigation into change makers and events related to expanding civil rights and Asian American Power Movement, and Modern World History. Furthermore, the recent rewrite of the Asian Studies course includes a unit on Asian American history and is available to high school students throughout the county.

At the elementary level, the accomplishments and contributions of Asian Americans are embedded into the curriculum. For example, when learning about citizenship students study the case of the U.S. vs. Wong Kim Arc. This case established birthright citizenship for many immigrants but especially Asian Americans. In grades three through five schools have the option of participating in the Unheard Perspectives Showcase where fifth graders can study the contributions of typically unheard of innovators, including Asian Americans. The natural embedding of Asian American history and contributions is more effective than a stand alone curriculum. Furthermore, the elementary social studies standards are currently up for edits that will make the framework more inclusive of multiple perspectives.

As a legislative platform, the Board believes high-quality education experiences are achieved through a balance of educational practices, available resources, public input, and accountability that is informed and guided by State Board established standards and models, rather than legislative mandates.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report on HB1323 from this Committee.