

March 3, 2025

Testimony on: HB1323 Education – Public Schools – Asian American History Teacher Professional Development and Resources
Committees: Ways and Means
Position: Favorable

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

As Founder of the Montgomery County Progressive Asian American Network (MoCoPAAN), I urge you to vote for Maryland HB1323. MoCoPAAN has been highly involved in the efforts by the school district in Montgomery County, but also connected nationally to campaigns that seek to improve public understanding of Asian Americans – a push that arose especially after record numbers of reported anti-Asian hate.

HB1323 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.

I have done professional development training for teachers, administrators and staff. Based on that experience, I am well aware that the baseline understanding requires improvement. In fact, when asked to name Asian Americans, they named Asian nationals. Recent national polls show that the public cannot name a prominent Asian American.

Asian American history is U.S. history. 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,

Aryani Ong
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