



Maryland House Ways and Means Committee  
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair

March 3, 2025

As leaders and advocates in OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates – Greater Washington DC Chapter (OCA-DC), we submit this testimony in strong support of Maryland House Bill HB1323. This bill seeks to enhance professional development opportunities for educators by incorporating Asian American history training programs into the state's public school education system. 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.

A comprehensive and inclusive history education is fundamental to preparing students for the diverse world in which they live. The teaching of U.S. history is incomplete without the inclusion of the experiences, struggles, and triumphs of Asian Americans, who have contributed significantly to the development of our nation. Yet, in many classrooms, these contributions remain overlooked or underrepresented. The passage of HB1323 would help ensure that teachers have the resources and training necessary to properly educate students about the rich and complex history of Asian Americans.

Asian Americans have played an integral role in shaping the U.S., from the early Chinese immigrants who built the transcontinental railroad to the Japanese American soldiers who fought valiantly in World War II despite the injustices of internment. They have contributed to advancements in science, technology, politics, and the arts, shaping American society in ways that are too often ignored in traditional curricula. Without proper education on these topics, students grow up with a limited understanding of the country's history, allowing stereotypes and misconceptions to persist.

Beyond ensuring historical accuracy, integrating Asian American history into our educational system has a profound impact on student engagement and achievement. Studies show that when students see themselves reflected in their lessons, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and motivation in the classroom. For Asian American students, learning about their history fosters pride



and confidence, while for non-Asian students, it cultivates empathy, cross-cultural understanding, and a more nuanced perspective of history.

The implementation of HB1323 will provide educators with the necessary training and instructional materials to teach Asian American history effectively. It will support the development of lesson plans that accurately represent the struggles and contributions of Asian Americans, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded and factual understanding of U.S. history. By investing in professional development for teachers, we empower them to create a more inclusive and enriching learning environment for all students.

Furthermore, Maryland has a diverse and growing Asian American population, and it is our responsibility to ensure that our educational policies reflect the experiences of all communities. Passing HB1323 sends a strong message that Maryland values diversity, equity, and historical accuracy in education. This bill aligns with broader efforts across the country to expand inclusive curricula that represent the true diversity of the American experience.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB1323. By equipping our educators with the tools they need to teach Asian American history, we are making an investment in a more informed, thoughtful, and inclusive society.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Adam Lee, PhD

President, 2025 and 2019, OCA-DC