



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

**Position:** Favorable

3 March 2025

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

My name is Mary Tom, and I am writing to express my 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.

I'm a baby boomer, age 74, and I'm blessed with three grandchildren whom are under the age of 12, and I asked them what they've learned about Asian American history in their MCPS public schools. They recalled learning about the China Dynasty and maybe the transcontinental railroad. As an American born Chinese (ABC), I would have appreciated learning about the immigration of Chinese, like my parents, the sacrifices they made to provide a better future for their children, and learning about the accomplishments of Asian Americans in my social studies classes. It would have been so edifying to learn of the challenges of my immigrant parents and the wondrous accomplishments of Asian Americans in our American history curriculums. I want that knowledge to be learned for my grandkids and the generations to follow. Asian Americans aided in building our country into what it is today.

Let us also be proud of Asian Americans' involvement with the advancement of Civil Rights. Maryland students need to know 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.

Mary L. Tom  
2024 Immediate Past President  
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