

Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I write in strong support of the bill, **State Department of Education - Asian American History - Accurate Instruction.**

This bill is critical to ensuring that Asian American history is implemented consistently and meaningfully across Maryland schools. Too often, whether this history is taught well depends on chance—such as an individual teacher’s background knowledge or whether a school happens to have appropriate resources—rather than a reliable, statewide commitment to equitable education.

This legislation aligns with the goals of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future by promoting equitable educational opportunities regardless of zip code. This bill ensures consistency, sustainability, and accountability across districts.

My commitment to supporting this bill comes from my experience as a grandparent, former classroom teacher, school administrator, and community advocate at both the local and national levels. In addition to these roles, during my tenure as an Administrator with Montgomery County government and MCPS, I had the opportunity to serve as a regularly scheduled guest speaker for the HR17 Course, “Ethnic Groups in American Society”, which is mandatory for all new MCPS teachers within 5 years of employment. Included in each Course is a class on the Asian Pacific American community. I taught that class for more than a decade and realized that professional training of this kind was critical to ensuring that

those with direct impact on our students have some basic understanding of the diversity of the community and the underlying issues related to being an obvious minority in the classroom. For Asian American students, their appearance, their names, and the sound of the spoken language are sources of constant sensitivity and at times – ridicule and bullying. Add to this, their history in this country and their history amongst themselves, and the challenges become magnified. Understanding the issues, the misperceptions and stereotypes of the Asian American community are critical to understanding the challenges encountered by the APA students. APA students need to be reassured that they are not “foreigners”, as many perceive them to be, - that they are very much a part of the fabric of this wonderful state and this wonderful country.

The need for this bill remains urgent. Schools play a critical role in shaping understanding, countering stereotypes, and fostering respect among students. Accurate, well-supported instruction in Asian American history benefits not only Asian American students, but all students, by strengthening civic understanding and cultural literacy.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill. Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Maryland’s students.

Sincerely,

Ginny Gong

Former MCPS Administrator

Retired, Director, Community Use of Public Facilities