

Committees: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: **State Department of Education - Asian American History - Accurate Instruction**

Position: **Favorable**

April 1, 2026

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

Hi, my name is Miles Chen, and I'm a 5th grader at Bannockburn Elementary School in Montgomery County.

I was so happy when I heard that HB1059 crossed to the Senate. When I testified, I told the Ways and Means committee it was my third year coming here and asking for better cultural representation in Maryland classrooms. I felt so seen when Chair Wilkins spoke directly to me after my testimony and said she would work to advance the bill. I hope I can have that same impact on this committee today because I'm really looking forward to meeting Governor Moore.

Right now, Asian American history is often missing or barely mentioned in classrooms. That means teachers may want to teach it, but don't have the lesson plans or books that reflect our stories.

I experienced this myself last year in 4th grade. I had an assignment to write a persuasive essay about a personal area of expertise, and I chose Jensen Huang, the CEO of NVIDIA. But when I looked for information at school, there were no classroom materials and no library books about him. So I had to do my own research at home. I used books from my own library and searched for articles myself. I had to teach myself—because the school didn't have the resources.

And that's the problem. I shouldn't have to become my own teacher just to see myself reflected in what I learn.

Asian American history is American history. Students shouldn't have to keep asking year after year to be seen.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB1059. Thank you.

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My name is Jasper Chen and I'm an 8th grader at Pyle Middle School in Montgomery County. First, thank you Delegate Valderamma for moving HB1059 across the finish line in the House and bringing it here to the Senate. I also have to say, it's kind of nice to be in a new room—I've spent the last 3 years testifying in the House Ways and Means Committee, so this is a nice change of scenery!

Delegate Valderrama first introduced this legislation more than five years ago. Since then, students like me have testified, shared personal stories, and asked to be seen in our own education. Yet after all this time, the bill still has not passed. That is not just disappointing—it is unacceptable.

HB1059 gives teachers the training and resources they need to teach Asian American history accurately, and ensures age-appropriate materials are shared with every county. The Department will consult experts to make sure this history is taught correctly.

I also want to be honest: by the time funding and materials are in place in 2028, I'll already be halfway through high school. Every year this bill is delayed, another class of students goes without seeing their communities reflected in what they learn—and that absence leaves a mark that can't be erased.

I hope this is the year Maryland chooses to act—so my younger brothers and future students can see themselves in their education, and so no one has to keep asking to be seen in their own classrooms.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB1059. Thank you.