

The Honorable Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Written Testimony in Support of HB0770 – Korean American

Day Dear Honorable Delegates,

My name is Evelyn Park, a second-generation Korean American and a member of the League of Korean Americans (LOKA). I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of HB0770 to establish January 13th as Korean American Day in Maryland.

Passing "Korean American Day" as a legislative bill is important because it provides a stable and lasting opportunity to celebrate and honor the many contributions of Korean Americans to Maryland. Every January 13, Korean American Day commemorates the arrival of the first Korean immigrants to the United States in 1903. Yet even my parents, who are first generation Korean Americans, were not always aware of the exact date — a reminder that without formal recognition, even the most meaningful commemorations can go unnoticed. Making it official through legislation would ensure that the day is consistently acknowledged and celebrated.

Korean immigration to the United States began in Hawaii, where early immigrants worked long hours on sugarcane plantations under harsh conditions. These early Koreans laid the foundation for the Korean American community today. It is therefore important that their legacy be honored not just in memory, but in law.

Korean Americans have contributed to American life in many fields like science, medicine, education, politics, and the arts. Figures such as former Maryland First Lady and accomplished artist Yumi Hogan, along with countless small business owners right here in Maryland, show how the Korean American community has helped make this state a more vibrant and inclusive place. "Korean American Day" would create an opportunity for more people to learn about the community's history, its struggles, and its journey from immigration to influence.

Listening to K-pop, watching Korean dramas, and eating Korean food have always made me feel proud of my heritage. Still, for many years, that pride was something I mostly shared only with my family and friends. Making Korean American Day a legislative holiday would allow not only Korean Americans but everyone to join in celebrating and appreciating that heritage together. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB0770.

Thank you,

Evelyn Park