

**Committee:** Ways and Means

**Testimony On:** HB1059: Education – Asian American History – Professional Development and Library Materials

**Presented By:** Matthew Adjodha, District 8 Constituent, UMD Student, and UMD AASU Co-President

**Position:** Favorable

March 2, 2026

To the Esteemed Maryland General Assembly Ways and Means Committee,

Nice to meet you! My name is **Matthew Adjodha** and I am a constituent of Maryland Congressional District 8 and a senior pursuing a dual degree in Public Health Science and Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics at the **University of Maryland, College Park (UMD)**. **I am writing to you today to strongly urge your support on HB1059: Education – Asian American History – Professional Development and Library Materials**, a bill to support integration of Asian American history education in Maryland schools K–12 sponsored by Delegates Valderrama, Bhandari, Chang, Wolek, and Wu scheduled for a House hearing this Wednesday, March 4th at 1:00 PM. As the son of Asian Caribbean immigrant parents, Co-President of the **Asian American Student Union (AASU) at UMD**, and a student in an **Asian American Studies (AAS) Department** course under the tireless advocate **Dr. Philip Tajutsu Nash**, I believe fellow Asian Marylanders and Marylanders as a whole would appreciate this policy's celebration of our personhood.

Growing up even in a place as diverse as Montgomery County in Rockville within District 8, my multi-ethnic public schooling and now attendance at a public university lacked few if any mentions of Asian Americans and their contributions to American science, literature, television, politics, advocacy, and more. Specifically being Indo-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean, I witnessed firsthand how stereotypical, narrow definitions of Asian identity presented in media through TV and film caricatures and sparse mention of Asian Americans in Social Studies and History courses affected my classmates stereotyping me and my close friends as silent, model minorities, perpetual immigrants, and monolithic Brown people with no nuance offered to express our cultural, religious, and ethnic distinctions.

Now that I have found a community of politically-active students on campus and climbed the ranks of leadership within AASU, I have learned so much in the way of Asian Americans historically being very politically active, very entrenched in solidarity work across Black American, Latin American, working class, queer, and other labor movements, and adapting our ancient traditions to the modern age; far from being a silent minority, Asian Americans have been relegated to silence via our education systems. My current AAS class alone has done in five weeks for my understanding of the Vietnam War, Korean War, Japanese (Latin) American internment, Asian American litigation in the Supreme Court, and more what twelve years in public school barely addressed.

Mine are just a few in the sea of experiences of Asian Marylanders, yet data supports Asian American content makes up 5% or less of the Maryland content frameworks for middle and high school, with 71% of those mentions related to stigmatizing topics of war and refugeeism which narrow children's perceptions of Asians in the United States. HB1059 would directly confront these issues of narrow representation by proposing \$500,000 allocated towards improving Asian representation in school libraries and advancing professional development such as the Asian American Education Project for Maryland's Continuing Professional Development Program. With current federal attacks on ethnic studies and state-sactioned ICE violence against Asian Marylanders, students, and children, it is *imperative* Maryland create safe spaces for its brightest young minds to question the world around them and affirm their and their peers' humanity. Thank you for your time and consideration in my hope that you will support this crucial bill, and **please feel free to contact me (240-234-0999 or [madjodha@umd.edu](mailto:madjodha@umd.edu)) or AASU ([umd.aasu@gmail.com](mailto:umd.aasu@gmail.com)) with any questions or concerns.**

**I again urge you to consider supporting HB1059 and expand our recognition of Asian Marylanders everywhere.**

Respectfully,  
Matthew Adjodha (he/him/his)  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Constituent of Maryland Congressional District 8