

Sewon Kim
HB1059
OCA-DC
Fav.

Good afternoon Maryland House Ways of Means Committee. My name is Sewon Kim and I am a Freshman at Richard Montgomery High School. I am here today to advocate with my fellow peers to place AAPI history in our education curriculum.

Last year, I testified in-person to implement House Bill 0875. I'm back again this year, encouraging you to vote for this bill. I have realized how important it is for AAPI history to be taught to Maryland students. Let me cut to the chase. Not long ago, to be exact February 15 of 2026, I went to Whole Foods with my mom. As we were looking at the flowers and plants, a nearby **grown** man came up to me and said, "Ni-hao, ni-hao." I'm Korean. My poor mother who has trouble speaking English didn't even hear or understand what he said. And this isn't even the first time, there have been MULTIPLE instances where I have been assumed to be Chinese because of my skin color. After shopping at Giant a few years back, a **grown** man came up to me and said the same thing to me and my friend. Again, I am Korean and so is she. And that's not even the worst part. The worst part is, there were **grown** people mocking a thirteen, fourteen year old girl who happened to look Chinese because I have yellow skin. I am shocked how uneducated people can be. After telling my mother, she told me the best way to "win" is to not say anything. I choose not to stay silent. I choose to speak up to change this, now.

AAPI History has never been apparent in my education. Recently, I have learned about the U.S. government forcibly relocating 120,000 Japanese Americans into concentration camps. Does this sound familiar to you? Does this sound like the Concentration Camps during World War II made by Nazi's for antisemitism? But how come, how come I haven't known about this? Maybe I haven't been paying attention in class during my elementary and middle school years but this subject of Japanese American concentration camps has NEVER been mentioned in any of my classes until APGOV this year. And this event wasn't even thoroughly explained.

I hope you understand the urgency I feel to implement this bill. We have seen results of what undereducation could do, so we should change it. If you want to make an incentive change in our education, our first step is to put AAPI History in our school curriculum.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and giving me this opportunity to speak about my experiences.