

Committees: Ways and Means

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

Position: Favorable

March 2, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee, my name is Jasper Chen, and I am an 8th grader at Pyle Middle School in Montgomery County.

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 is about ensuring that Asian American history is not just encouraged, but actually implemented in a consistent and meaningful way across all schools. Right now, whether this history is taught depends on chance—whether a teacher happens to have prior knowledge or whether a school happens to have the right materials. That is not equity. That is luck. And students should not have to rely on luck to receive a complete and accurate education.

I also want to be honest: at this point, passing this bill doesn't change my own K-12 education. By the time funding begins in 2028, I will already be halfway through high school and hopefully playing tennis full time. Every year this bill is delayed, another class of students passes through Maryland schools without ever seeing their communities reflected in their education. That absence leaves a mark that can't be erased. I hope this is the year Maryland chooses to act—so that my younger brothers and future students can learn history that includes them, and so no one has to keep asking to be seen in their own classrooms.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB1059. Thank you