

Committees: Ways and Means

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

Position: Favorable

Date: March 4, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Maryam Ghulami and I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1059.

Although I did not grow up in the United States, and I did not complete my primary or secondary education here. I later came to the U.S. to pursue higher education and completed my Master's degree in this country. Through both my personal educational journey and my current professional work, I have gained a deep appreciation for how curriculum shapes belonging, identity, and understanding.

Currently, I work on a school-based project that directly serves and supports the Asian American community. Through this work, I see firsthand how limited representation of Asian American history in K–12 education affects students, families, and educators alike. Many students are eager to see their histories reflected accurately and meaningfully in what they learn, yet educators often lack the training and resources to teach this content effectively.

Throughout my experience working with schools, it has become clear that the absence of Asian American history in curricula is not just an oversight—it sends an unintended message about whose stories are valued in our education system. Without intentional inclusion, students are left with gaps in historical understanding and fewer opportunities to develop cultural awareness and empathy.

HB1059 represents a critical step toward meaningful and sustainable implementation of Asian American history in Maryland schools. While curriculum standards are essential, they must be supported by ongoing professional development and access to high-quality library and instructional materials. This bill recognizes that educators need proper training and resources in order to deliver inclusive, accurate, and age-appropriate instruction.

By investing in professional development and school library materials, HB1059 moves beyond symbolic inclusion and toward systemic change. It ensures that inclusive education does not depend solely on individual educators or local capacity, but reflects a coordinated statewide commitment to equity and excellence.

This legislation aligns with Maryland's broader educational goals by strengthening instruction for all students. When young people learn a more complete and accurate history, they gain a deeper understanding of their peers, their communities, and the broader American story.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1059. Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to Maryland's students and educators.

Sincerely,

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