



## **FAVORABLE**

### **Senate Bill 304 - Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement**

**Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Howard County  
Betsy Singer and Laura Salganik, Co-chairs**

Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Hearing - February 3, 2022

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Howard County has worked closely with the Asian American community over the past several years. We have jointly represented and supported our communities as we advance cooperation and understanding through educational and cultural activities. Many of these have been through and/or related to the Howard County Public School System.

The Jewish Community Relations Council fully supports and urges a **favorable report from this Committee on SB 304**. This important bill would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum materials for units of instruction on Asian American history that would then be taught in every public school in Maryland. There is a need for a more inclusive statewide curriculum that better reflects Asian American experiences and contributions, in Maryland and our region. This bill also allows for flexibility so that each of the twenty-four local boards of education can determine the specific amount of instruction necessary for the implementation of these standards.

We believe that through a comprehensive statewide curriculum, all students in the Maryland Public Schools can become better informed about Asian American history, the contributions of Asian Americans, and the role of Asian Americans in the ongoing development of our Nation. It would also enable the Asian students throughout the public schools to have a sense of pride and feel that they are part of this Nation's history and culture moving forward.

All too often there are negative comments and/or action taken or directed at Asian students in the public school. This is frequently based upon a lack of knowledge or understanding and preconceived notions or prejudice. An effective way to limit or end these types of occurrences is through a comprehensive curriculum, as proposed in SB 304, which will benefit all students.

We are aware of the increase of anti-Asian incidents that have occurred during the past few years around the state and country. For example, the 2019 report of the Howard County Office of Human Rights and Equity shows that there were eleven (11) Hate-Bias incidents against Asians. We believe that through the comprehensive curriculum that SB 304 would establish there would be an educational aspect presented that could provide accurate and historically correct information that could reduce, and hopefully eliminate prejudices toward Asian Americans. Therefore, we urge a **FAVORABLE REPORT ON SB 304**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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