

**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 304
Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement**

**Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee February 3, 2022
1:00 PM ET**

**Presented to: Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman
By: Grace Chen**

FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

My name is Grace Chen and I am a 9th grader at Marriotts Ridge High School of Howard County. On the weekends, I attend Howard County Chinese School to learn my heritage, language, and my ethnic culture. I am also a member of Howard County Chinese School AAPI Youth Ambassadors Program. I am writing this testimony in support of the Senate Bill SB-304 Title "Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement".

I urge a favorable report on SB-304, which would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum for units of instruction on Asian American history in public schools in Maryland. This bill would lead to the development of a statewide curriculum that better reflects Asian American experiences and contributions, in Maryland and our region, while allowing local boards to determine the amount of instruction and implementation of these standards.

Sad, but true, there is not much knowledge about Asian-American history that is currently taught in school. Specifically, content about the contribution of Asian-Americans' to our country is not shown at all, resulting in frequent, biased opinions and stereotypes that do not define Asian people.

The evidence that I must testify with was something that happened when I was in 6th grade. In Spanish class, me and my classmates were learning how to express what we do and do not like. The other students were saying "me gusta comer perro", which translates to "I like to eat dogs". This hurt my feelings deeply, and still, I wasn't able to stand up for myself against the other 11-year-olds. None of my other Asian friends in my class could say anything at all, and the teacher didn't even mention it. These biased opinions and stereotypes that are correlated with Asian people don't reflect the truth at all!

Asian Americans are Americans. The contributions of Asians to American history are taught incompletely, if at all, throughout our state's schools. SB-304 seeks to address this problem by ensuring that a unit of Asian American history is taught will be very imperative.

I strongly support adding the contribution of Asian Americans' and other culture groups' in our social studies curriculum. When Sir Francis Bacon published in his work, *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), he had a famous saying: "knowledge itself is power". My understanding of this saying is, equipped with broad knowledge and being well-educated, our young generation will be able to understand what has happened in the history around the world. Once we grasp this knowledge, we can fully and finally respect each other, appreciate each other, reunite and stand strong to move our nation towards a better future.

In summary, I sincerely support this bill and urge a favorable report on SB-304. I look forward for your decision.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Grace Chen