

FAVORABLE

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 P.M.

Zhijin J. Lin

3248 Pine Bluffs Dr,

Ellicott City MD, 21042

Dear Chairman Pinsky and members of the Committee,

My name is Jonathan Lin, and I am an 11th grade student at Marriotts Ridge High School in Ellicott City. I strongly support a favorable report of S.B. 304 due to my personal experiences and the current political climate.

I live in Howard County, which has almost triple the percentage of Asians compared to Maryland as a whole (19.3% vs. 6.7%). Yet throughout school, I've only been taught about Asian American history twice: once briefly 9th Grade U.S. History, and a second time as a passing reference when discussing *Korematsu v. US*. We've learned about the Constitution, the Founding Fathers, African Americans, Native Americans, abolitionists, women's suffrage, and more, but not Asian American history.

Contrary to what many may believe, Asian Americans have a long history in the United States. In fact, Filipino sailors settled in New Orleans in the late 1700s, and even helped the US fight the War of 1812. Over 15000 Chinese workers were instrumental in building the Transcontinental Railroad in the mid-1800s. However, these contributions were not always appreciated. Californian courts found that Asians could not testify against whites. Congress also passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which the Supreme Court upheld. And in today's political climate, some erroneously believe that Asian Americans have always been well-off, are to blame for the Covid-19 pandemic, or are just here to steal jobs. Teaching Asian American history will help to change discriminatory perceptions and paint a more complete picture of the United States.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 304. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Zhijin J. Lin