

Good afternoon, Senator Pinsky and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

My name is Xuan Weng, a parent of three kids, a Chinese teacher in a private school in Maryland, and the principal of Howard County Chinese School. The Chinese School has been serving the local community in Howard County for 23 years, with more than 1700 students. The majority of our students are also public school students, and most of their parents are registered voters. I am testifying to support SB304 on behalf of the Chinese School community.

Today, I start with a true story between two of my 8th grade students, Joe and Sam. I use pseudonyms to protect their identity. Joe is an Asian American and Sam is not. Not only are they both star students, but they had also been close friends for almost 10 years, so did their families. One day in the last school year, they got into a fight and were sent to the Headmaster's office. It turned out that what caused the conflict was because Sam called Joe "Ching Chong".

"It was just a joke", said Sam, "I thought it was a joke! I never knew that phrase was something so offensive!" This ignorance, unfortunately, ended a 10-year friendship between two kids and their families. The true evil lies in the fact that someone can say (or do) something so offensive and racist without knowing it can be deeply hurtful to others.

Unfortunately, such ignorance and insensitivity have turned into a nation-wide surge of anti-Asian hate during the pandemic. According to [a national report](#), 9,081 incidents of harassment and violence against AAPI individuals were reported from March 2020 to June 2021.

Just two weeks ago, an Asian American woman was brutally killed as she was pushed in front of an oncoming train in a New York subway station.

As educators, our mission is to confront ignorance with knowledge. We *have to teach* our students to understand what “Ching Chong” means, to know what Asian American immigrants have experienced in the past century, to connect what is happening to Asian Americans today with the past, and to recognize and combat anti-AAPI American racism and discrimination.

Awareness leads the way to change! We should educate our kids about Asian American History as soon as possible in order to create a more diverse, more peaceful and more powerful future!

On behalf of the Howard County Chinese School community, I urge you to vote in favor of SB304. Thank you for the opportunity for me to speak. I am now available to answer questions that you may have.