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May 17, 2021

Sent Via Email to: dolan@ohiosenate.gov and sarah.totedo@ohiosenate.gov

Dear Senators Dolan and Totedo:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony on behalf of Asian Services in Action (bka "ASIA") regarding the proposed budget amendment that will create and fund the Ohio Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) commission and Office of AAPI Affairs that has been submitted in the Ohio Senate for inclusion in the Ohio Senate Budget Bill. ASIA serves nearly 60,000 AAPI, immigrant and refugee community members each year across Northeast Ohio, including District 24 in Cuyahoga County where I am a longtime resident/constituent/voter.

Asians are the fastest growing community across the country as well as in Ohio. Asians contribute significantly to Ohio's economic vitality. While Ohio's population has decreased in some geographic areas, Ohio has an opportunity to attract more people to the state by showing that Ohio considers the needs of the Asian Community. The creation and funding of a Commission and an Office of Asian Affairs is long overdue to support the growing Asian Community in Ohio. With the unprecedented increase in anti-Asian violence across the country as well as CDC reports that suicide is the first leading cause of death among Asian American young adults aged 15-24, there is a need to understand the issues impacting the AAPI community better. An Office of Asian Affairs would be an important starting point to address the particular issues of the AAPI community.

If I can provide additional information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Elaine Tso
CEO, Asian Services In Action (bka ASIA)