

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Lisa Factora-Borchers and Rosie Factora Borchers
Testifying as Proponent

Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Rosie:

My name is Rosario Factora Borchers. I am eight years old and in the third grade at Evening Street Elementary school in Worthington. I am here to ask you to support HB 171 so I can learn more about my family's history, and how they came to this country. I also want to be able for my friends to learn about my family, especially my grandparents. I call them Lolo and Lola which means grandfather and grandmother in Tagalog, their native language in the Philippines. I want to be able to hear and share stories about my family at school. Please support this bill to help children like me feel a deeper sense of belonging in our community.

Lisa:

My name is Lisa Factora-Borchers, and this is my daughter Rosario Factora Borchers. We live in Worthington, and I am a co-director at OPAWL: Building AAPI Feminist Leadership. I am also a parent asking this committee to support HB 171 which updates the Social Studies model curriculum to better reflect the histories of all Ohioans by including the migration histories, societal contributions and experiences of a range of communities in Ohio and the United States who are not currently represented in our classrooms.

My parents moved from the Philippines to the United States almost sixty years ago. They married and began starting a family in New Jersey, but decided to move to Ohio to pursue their dream, the American dream, of putting their four kids through school, owning a home, and contributing to their communities. My father began his Ohio career working at Massillon State Hospital and ended the last twenty years of his career in psychiatry and mental health working for the government within the federal penitentiary system.

As much as they loved raising us in Ohio, as a child, it was difficult to not learn any history about migration or anything that narrated how Asians, Asian Americans, and specifically Filipinos contributed to Ohio or this country. It wasn't until much later in life that I learned that my parents were part of a larger movement of Filipinos who came to this country to support the medical field because of my father's professional training.

As a child growing up in Ohio, I felt singular and that my family's story didn't matter. I reasoned that since my family's story was not included in any way in the curriculum, I figured that it meant that my culture didn't matter as much and that my family didn't really belong. A 2020 study from the National Education Association shows us that students of color, in particular, who participated in courses that reflected different identities, cultures, and backgrounds had a greater sense of belonging and sense of self. An updated model curriculum would **provide rich, engaging options for teaching and learning social studies** in Ohio. It will equip teachers with activities and lessons that can support and develop respect for the students in our classrooms who come from different backgrounds than our own. Students are also more engaged when they see their communities reflected in the classroom. It's important that our students **can connect to the information** that they're learning in school.

I have dozens of cousins, most of them live in the coastal cities - Atlanta, New York, and Los Angeles - and as a child, I yearned to live in a place where I could more easily access history and storytelling that reflected my family's story. We fail our kids when we don't provide them with an education that truly **mirrors Ohio's current makeup as a state**. H.B. 171 can solve for that by educating students about the experiences, migration, and contributions of a range of communities that already, and in many cases, have long called Ohio home.

As a parent to two school age children, it is imperative for schools to affirm that Ohio is indeed a diverse state with all kinds of workers and families who have built their lives here, lived out their dreams in this state. My retired parents still live in their beloved split level house on a cul-de-sac in Massillon, Ohio and they love Ohio more than any place they have ever been. I want their contributions and stories to be acknowledged in the curriculum my children learn in their schools.

I respectfully urge the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee to consider my testimony and to vote yes in support of H.B. 171. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation.