

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Jona Hilario
Testifying as Proponent

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

My name is Jona Hilario, I am a parent of two biracial kids who go to Hilliard City Schools and a naturalized US citizen who was born and grew up in the Philippines. I am writing to ask the 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.

I grew up in the Philippines but my connection with this country did not start when I came here as a PhD student at the Ohio State University in 2004. My grandfather Briccio Hilario fought alongside US allies during World War II. After the war, he co-founded a church inside the Veteran's complex in Quezon City with US military officers and soldiers. This connection is not unique to me, it is true for many Filipino-Americans. There are 4.4 M Filipino-Americans in the US, some who have been here for generations and some who recently immigrated. I want my children to understand this connection between their Filipino heritage and their life here in the US. I want them to feel a sense of belonging, that all parts of them are accepted and seen in school, which is a place that contributes to the development of their self-identity. I also want them to learn the stories and contributions of other communities where their classmates belong so they can develop empathy and connection with other kids and communities. I believe that is what will help shape them to be good citizens and good people.

I also know that their teachers are already doing their best to make their classrooms a great place of learning for their students but I know that our state can do more to provide them with the resources that they need. Implementing HB 171 will use an already existing process to update Social Studies model curriculum that will have the input of Ohio educators and other Ohio education stakeholders. In fact it is already endorsed by many teacher organizations including the Ohio Council for the Social Studies. This bill also has broad community support including from parent organizations and community organizations.

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.

[name], I live in [city], and I am [your title at your organization (if representing an org)]. I am a [student / parent / educator / concerned citizen], and I am asking this committee to support HB 171 which

I believe that passing this bill is good for Ohio and Ohio students because...

- [Share a story about how an updated model curriculum would be beneficial for you, your family, your students, or a community you belong to.]

- [Share a story about how the lack of a curriculum that reflects all Ohioans has impacted you, your family, your students, or a community you belong to.]
- See [here for a 1-pager about HB 171](#), [here for a campaign FAQ doc](#), and [here for a copy of the bill text](#)

Suggested talking points:

- 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.
 - 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.
- H.B. 171 **takes advantage of the existing curriculum review process**, providing options and enriching the guidance used by our education experts to continue developing the best curriculum for Ohio's students.
- 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.
- H.B. 171 has the backing and support of the **vast majority of Ohio teachers**, with endorsements from Ohio Education Association, Ohio Federation of Teachers, and Ohio Council of the Social Studies.

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.