

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Cynthia Chiou
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 Cynthia Chiou and I live in Cincinnati and I am a member of OPAWL. I am a concerned citizen and I am 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.

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

- An updated model curriculum will make those who look like me feel like we are a part of the community. As an Asian American, I grew up with very limited social studies curriculum that did not tell the story of my people immigrating to this country. This dangerously erases the contributions many important Asian Americans made to creating this country built on immigrants. This sense of lack of belonging contributed to me feeling like a perpetual foreigner in my own country that I was born and raised in. I am an extremely proud citizen of our country and I am committed to our schools telling the beautiful and rich history of all peoples and fabrics that make up our country. Diversity fuels innovation and enrichment in communities. Without updated social studies curriculum I fear we are doing a dangerous disservice to our next generation in limiting their understanding of the full history of our country. If we fundamentally believe we need to care for each and every one of our community members and that we all deserve to be treated and cared for as humans, it starts with understanding our community members through the rich history that brought us all together.
- 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.