

**Proponent Testimony for House Bill 171  
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
December 10, 2023**

Christine Marie Camacho  
Founding Member, Chamorro Association of the Midwest

Dear Chair Bird, Representative Mary Lightbody and House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Christine Marie Camacho, and I am a resident of Pittsburgh with a unique connection to the state of Ohio. For the past ten years, I have been traveling to Ohio with my children to ensure they receive exposure to the Chamorro culture as the community there is significantly larger and more active than in our home state. This experience brings me here to support House Bill 171, which proposes to enrich Ohio's K-12 social studies curriculum with a more inclusive representation of diverse backgrounds and histories.

My journey to connect my children with their Chamorro heritage in Ohio highlights a gap in cultural education that many families face. The recent census data showing a substantial increase in the Pacific Islander and Chamorro populations in the Midwest from 2010-2020 emphasizes the need for educational systems to adapt to these demographic shifts. As a parent, it is vital to me that all children, including my own, see their histories and cultures reflected in their education. This not only fosters a sense of identity and belonging but also promotes understanding and respect among all students.

The impact of House Bill 171 extends beyond the Chamorro community in Ohio. It represents a broader commitment to preparing all students for a multicultural world by providing a more comprehensive and diverse educational experience. This inclusion is essential for building empathy and understanding in our increasingly interconnected society.

In conclusion, as a Pittsburgh resident who has depended on Ohio's Chamorro community to provide cultural education for my children, I urge you to consider the far-reaching benefits of House Bill 171. This bill is an opportunity to make Ohio's education system a model for cultural inclusivity and diversity. I respectfully ask that you vote in favor of this bill, recognizing its potential to positively transform the educational experiences of countless students.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available for any questions you may have.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase,

Christine Marie Camacho