

**Testimony for HB 171**  
**Submitted by: Michelle Oyakawa**  
**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 Michelle Oyakawa, I live in Columbus, OH. I am an educator 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 for several reasons.

- I have taught college students in Ohio for 10 years at Ohio State, Kenyon College, and Muskingum University. I teach sociology and classes focused on inequality and race. Most students arrive with very little understanding of the history and experiences of racial minorities in the United States. It is very common for them to express frustration with how poorly prepared they were by their K-12 education. This is a real problem for students who want to go on to work in diverse communities both in Ohio and elsewhere, and they recognize that they are not getting something they need in their current social studies curriculum.
- I am biracial Asian American and my whole life I have dealt with ignorant comments and ideas about what that means. Anyone educated in Ohio should be taught the truth about how this country was built by people from all kinds of different backgrounds. This would help students from many different backgrounds have greater self esteem and feel that they belong here.
- My great grandparents came to the US from Japan and spent most of their lives here. Unfortunately, despite being loyal Americans, they were put in the internment camps and the wealth that they had built in California was stolen from them. Ohio welcomed them in the wake of that injustice. I think that is something that Ohioans can take pride in. When I went to the exhibit on Japanese internment at the Smithsonian in DC, I saw advertisements actively recruiting Japanese people to come to Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. My grandfather Yoshi Oyakawa represented the United States at the 1952 Olympics and won a gold medal in swimming; he was also the captain of the Ohio State swim team. All Ohio students should know that this country was built by many different kinds of people.

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.