

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Tika Adhikari
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 Tika, I live in Pickerington, and I am an Ohio parent to two brown students in Ohio Public Schools. I am not just an Ohio parent but also 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 it would equip our teaching staff with the knowledge of true histories of the Ohio diverse communities. We truly need our teachers to be knowledgeable on the true histories behind our nation being famous as 'the melting pot'. Teachers' unbiased knowledge on immigration history will potentially teach our students to grow up as supportive and non discriminative youths for all the communities residing in this great state.

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.

I am from the Bhutanese-Nepali community here in Columbus and an updated model curriculum would also be beneficial for my community because our students do not understand why we have more than three nationalities in almost every household now.

I would like to share an unpleasant but true story that has been negatively impacting my family for a few years now. My child was born in Nepal and she was always very proud of her motherland, as she grew up hearing me that Gautam Buddha was also born in Nepal. One day her middle school social study teacher told her and her peers that Gautam Buddha was born in India. When my child attempted to correct the statement, the teacher literally said that my child was wrong and Nepal is one "piece" of India. Other students found the conversation funny and laughed at my child. She arrived home very upset and questioned the credibility of what I had taught her. The reality is the great wisdom and intellectual icon was born in Kapilvastu, Nepal and got his valuable wisdom from Bodh Gaya, India. And Nepal isn't and never was part of India. My child refuses to go back to that school after that incident. We had to emphasize her to go to school, but she still questions that incident and the credibility of my knowledge about the iconic figure.

An updated model curriculum would provide rich, engaging options for teaching and learning social studies in Ohio. It would 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 based on the true facts. It's important that our students can connect the information that they're learning in school to what they already know from their family's lived experience.

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.

Thank you for your public service to Ohions.