

May 17, 2021

Dear Ohio State Finance Committee:

I am writing today to support funding for SC 2198. Over 350,000 Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) people live in Ohio. There are many reasons why funding should be appropriated for SC2198 for operating expenses for an Ohio AAPI Commission and the Office of Asian-American Affairs, allocation of \$2 million per year for service to AAPI organizations who serve our communities and \$100,000 per year for refugee services through the Jobs and Family Services Program.

As a member of this fast-growing demographic, I see the need for visibility for AAPI. As anti-Asian sentiment is again resurging, we see acts of violence and discrimination toward our children, parents and friends. The elderly are being targeted more and more frequently.

I fear the next incident will be toward someone I love.

This is a time where we make visible the AAPI people that contribute to Ohio. AAPI's are the only racial demographic that does not receive any kind of support in the form of an Ohio Affairs Commission. We have no one weighing in on policy or legislation for the needs of our quickly growing demographic. We have no governmental relationships to help community organizations serve the public. In times of fear like we have today, there is no Ohio guidance for our families, businesses or churches. Please allocate the funds for the AAPI Affairs Commission.

We must have a mechanism and funding to support the AAPI organizations that are doing the heavy lifting and have earned the trust of the communities. Communities that are invisible on many levels in our cities and towns have a hard time knowing how to apply for Covid19 Relief, filling out the Census and other activities including reporting instances of harassment. \$2 million annually will help these organization to enfranchise AAPI communities.

Lastly, refugee assistance is greatly needed. So many times, we welcome refugees to our state and do not support them by giving them basic knowledge of our systems, jobs, housing, education and other essential items. Jobs and Family Services has the infrastructure to give support to these families. I urge you to earmark at least \$100,000 for AAPI refugees.

For the love of family and fear of anti-Asian hate, I ask you to support these measures fiscally. AAPI Ohioans are our educators, healthcare workers and small business owners. We contribute to this state and deserve to be visible and seen.

Respectfully yours,

Emily Momohara