



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

**Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 214
Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

Good morning, Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 214, which will require instruction in Asian American history for grades kindergarten through twelve, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

Under this legislation, the superintendent of public instruction will be responsible for developing a model curriculum for instruction in Asian American history to include the contributions of Asian Americans to government, the arts, humanities, sciences, and the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the United States.

In addition, this model curriculum would include the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the subsequent legal challenges to that internment, as well as the military service of the 100th infantry battalion and the 442nd regimental combat team of the United States army during World War II. Each district and school would be able to determine the minimum amount of instructional time.

Teaching Asian American history is important for a variety of reasons. Asian Americans are too often treated as ‘perpetual foreigners’. A recent survey from AAPI Data showed that about 64% of Asian Americans have been asked questions such as “Where are you from?” with the assumption being that they are not from the United States.

This perception of being outsiders is a large part of what fuels hate against Asian Americans. However, people of Asian descent have been living in the United States for over two-hundred years, with the first wave arriving in Ohio in the 1870s, and are now one of the fastest growing populations in the country. The perception of Asian Americans as outsiders in their own country is caused at least in part by a lack of knowledge of this long history.

We can correct this by rightfully including Asian American history in our curriculum. By educating our children on the long history and contributions of Asian Americans, we can help to dispel this notion of Asian Americans as outsiders, while painting a fuller picture of American history. It is also important for Asian American students to learn stories that are reflective of their own experiences earlier in life.



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Illinois recently became the first state in the country to mandate that Asian American history be taught in public schools. Several other states are considering similar legislation, and it is my wish that Ohio joins them in teaching our youth a fuller picture of our shared American history.

Chairman Brenner and members of the committee, I appreciate your attention to this important issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration and passage of Senate Bill 214. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.