

Written Testimony for SC 2198
Submitted by Sharon Kim
Member of OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
Student at KASCO/Korean American Society of Central Ohio
Testifying as Proponent

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance committee,

My name is Sharon Kim and I live in Columbus, Ohio. I am the daughter of Korean immigrants who raised myself and my younger brother in Brecksville, Ohio. I am a member of OPAWL as well as a Korean language student at KASCO/Korean American Society of Central Ohio.

I am writing in support of SC 2198, the budget amendment that creates and funds the Ohio AAPI Commission and the Office of AAPI Affairs. Ohio's Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) population is one of the state's fastest-growing racial/ethnic demographic groups, having increased by 40% between 2000 and 2009. Additionally, from 2012 to 2018, the number of eligible AAPI voters in Ohio grew by 39%. In comparison there was only a 2% growth rate for the statewide eligible voting population during that same time. It is notable that currently, Asian and AAPI Ohioans are the only ethnic group without a state level entity that would allow for coordination of resources and provide a centralized point of contact.

Something needs to change. While resolutions and statements of solidarity help bring awareness to anti-Asian hate, we must take actionable steps to protect AAPI communities from further harm and violence and to invest in our wellbeing and livelihood. With the escalation of anti-Asian violence that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic, the deaths of six Asian women on March 16th in Atlanta, and the loss of four Sikh lives in the Indianapolis shooting on April 15th, we in the Ohio Asian and AAPI community are living in a constant state of fear and anxiety.

Your support for the Ohio AAPI Commission and Office of AAPI affairs along with your support for the additional two amendments listed below will help demonstrate that Ohio is invested in our community's safety and well-being:

1. Create and Fund the Ohio AAPI Affairs Commission and the Office of AAPI Affairs
2. \$2M earmarks for grants for community organizations that serve Asians and AAPIs
3. Increases earmarks for Refugee Program Services by \$100,000 per year

I respectfully and strongly encourage the Senate Finance Committee to pass these amendments. Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to testify in support of the above amendments.

Sincerely,

Sharon Kim