

**Proponent Testimony for House Bill 171
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
December 10, 2023**

Board of Directors
Chamorro Association of the Midwest

Dear Chair Bird, Representative Mary Lightbody and House Primary and Secondary Education Committee Members,

We appreciate this opportunity to voice our strong support for House Bill 171. Representing the Chamorro Association of the Midwest a community of over 700 adult members and their children and a registered 501(c)(3), we are collectively advocating for this important legislation.

Our Association's commitment extends beyond preserving Chamorro culture; it includes fostering understanding and appreciation for diverse heritages in the Midwest. This commitment is bolstered by our efforts in establishing sister organizations serving Chamorros in Indiana and Missouri. The recent census data, highlighting the growth of the Pacific Islander and Chamorro populations in the Midwest from 2010-2020, clearly illustrates the need for an education system that reflects our evolving demographics in the region.

House Bill 171 presents a unique opportunity to enhance the educational landscape of Ohio by integrating a diverse range of cultural histories and perspectives. This inclusion is not just about representation; it's about acknowledging the presence and contributions of all communities, including the Chamorro, within Ohio's rich tapestry. An inclusive curriculum is also vital for fostering a sense of identity and belonging among minority students and promoting mutual respect and empathy among all students.

As a significant and growing part of Ohio's community, our 700 members, their families and above all, our children directly benefit from such educational reforms. We, therefore, urge the committee to recognize the importance of this bill in reflecting the diversity of our state and in preparing our children for a global future. We advocate for the passage of House Bill 171, emphasizing its potential to positively shape the educational experiences and perspectives of our youth.

Thank you for considering our stance. We are prepared to engage in further discussions and answer any queries you may have.

Dangkalu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase,

Antoinette CHarfauros McDaniel
Education Director & Board Member
(On Behalf of the Chamorro Association of the Midwest Board)