

**Testimony for HB 171**  
**Submitted by: Gregory Lam, MD, MHS, MBA**  
**Ohio Institute of Communities of Color**  
**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 Dr. Gregory Lam (Dublin, OH) and I am the Co-chair of the Ohio Institute of Communities of Color (OICC), an organization that strives to promote equity, health, and social justice for Ohio's ethnic populations. Our institute is asking this committee to support HB 171, which updates the Social Studies model curriculum to better reflect the histories of all Ohioans.

Ohio has a rich history of contributions from ethnic minorities that should be realized and celebrated. Indigenous peoples inhabited this land over 15,000 years ago and created Mound Builders civilizations that are now being recognized internationally. Black and African Americans have been a part of Ohio's history since the state's creation in 1787 and have played an integral role in this nation's development. Asian and Pacific Islanders began settling in Ohio in the mid-1800s, now comprising over 3% of the total population and is the fastest growing ethnic group in Ohio. And more recently Latino and Hispanic groups in the 1940s and New American immigrants today continue to enrich Ohio's communities.

Each group increases the cultural and economic vitality of Ohio's neighborhoods. They diversify our understanding of the world and they make our communities better. The histories of these groups - their contributions, challenges, and legacies - should be taught in our schools as part of the history of America to better prepare our children for the world they will inherit.

An updated model curriculum is essential for our students and teachers. This bill provides for accurate tools for our students to understand the broader history of Ohio. It will equip teachers with activities and lessons that can support 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. It's important that our students can connect to the information that they're learning in school.

H.B. 171 has the backing and support of the vast majority of Ohio teachers, with endorsements from Ohio Education Association, Ohio Federation of Teachers, and Ohio Council of the Social Studies. H.B. 171 also has the support of the Ohio Institute of Communities of Color.

The Ohio Institute of Communities of Color respectfully urges 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.