

Testimony for H.B. 171
Submitted by: Sharon Kim
OPAWL
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 Sharon Kim. I am a parent to two young biracial Korean American children, both currently Columbus City Schools students, and I am asking this committee to support H.B. 171 which updates the Social Studies model curriculum to better reflect the histories of all Ohioans by including the migration histories, societal contributions and experiences of a range of communities in Ohio and the United States who are not currently represented in our classrooms.

I am a member of one of those Ohio communities who has historically not been represented in the classroom. I consider myself an Ohioan. I was born in the United States and was raised outside of Cleveland in Brecksville. I went to The Ohio State University for my undergraduate degrees. My family and I returned to Columbus after several years of living on the east coast. Ohio is where my husband and I have chosen to make our home and raise our children. I've searched in my memories for any instance of AAPI history being taught in my entire K-12 experience in Brecksville and I can't think of one lesson that included a piece of AAPI history. Any AAPI history that I did happen to learn as a child occurred either with conversations with my parents or books that I had picked up from the library, not from my teachers. It pains me that any AAPI history that I have learned only happened by chance as a child and later as an adult, only because I actively was seeking out this history, not because it was included in any part of my school curriculum. My hope in H.B. 171 is that by providing our K-12 students with an education that truly mirrors Ohio's current makeup as a state, it will provide a greater sense of self and belonging for all our Ohio students. H.B. 171 will create a foundation of history for Ohio children this is far more representative and accurate for the world that they're about to enter. It sets all Ohio children up to reach their full potential

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 takes advantage of the existing curriculum review process, providing options and enriching the guidance used by our education experts to continue developing the best curriculum for Ohio's students. An updated model curriculum would provide rich, engaging options for teaching and learning social studies in Ohio. It will equip teachers with activities and lessons that can support and develop 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. We fail our kids when we don't provide them with an education that truly mirrors Ohio's current makeup as a state. H.B. 171 can solve for that by educating students about the experiences, migration, and contributions of a range of communities that already, and in many cases, have long called Ohio home.

I urge 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.