

## **HB 1179: Virginia Asian American, Pacific Islander, Latino, and Indigenous Education Advisory Board**

*Patron: Delegate Clark*

*Committee on Education*

**Our Ask: Vote For HB 1179.**

**Summary:** HB 1179 establishes the **Virginia Asian American and Pacific Islander, Indigenous and Latino Education Advisory Board** to assess and develop Asian American and Pacific Islander, Indigenous and Latino social studies and history curricula. The bill closely mirrors the commission established by Governor Northam's Executive Order 39 to study African American History. Governor Northam's commission led to more than 15 counties offering African American History courses.<sup>1</sup>

**Background:** Current Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), Indigenous and Latino representation in Virginia history curriculums is limited. Out of the more than 400 standards and substandards in American and Virginian civic and history courses, less than 10 standards reference AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino communities in America<sup>2</sup>. The lack of AAPI, Indigenous and Latino representation in social studies curricula neglects the vibrant contributions that AAPI, Indigenous and Latino Americans have made to our culture, national security, technology, economy, and society as a whole.

HB 1179 rectifies this dearth of representation through the Virginia Asian American, Pacific Islander, Latino, and Indigenous Education Advisory Board. The board is composed of 24 nonlegislative citizen members, appointed as follows:

1. Eight members with experience and expertise in AAPI history, policy, and civil rights. The Governor, Senate Committee on Rules, and Speaker of the House will each appoint one of these members. The remaining five members will be appointed by the Chair of the Virginia-Asian Advisory Board.
2. Eight members with experience and expertise in Indigenous history, policy, and civil rights. The Governor, Senate Committee on Rules, and Speaker of the House will each appoint one of these members. The remaining five members will be appointed by the Chair of the Virginia Indian Advisory Board.
3. Eight members with experience and expertise in Latino history, policy, and civil rights. The Governor, Senate Committee on Rules, and Speaker of the House will each appoint one of these members. The remaining five members will be appointed by the Chair of the Virginia Latino Advisory Board.

All non-legislative board members appointed by the Governor are subject to General Assembly confirmation, and members appointed by the Chair of the Asian, Indian, or Latino Advisory Board cannot be a current member of their respective advisory board. The board also includes five ex-officio office members or their designee: the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Director of the State Council of Higher Education, the Secretary of Education, the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, and the Chief Workforce Development Officer.

In total, the Virginia Asian American, Pacific Islander, Latino, and Indigenous Education Advisory board will be composed of 29 members. The board will be empowered to make recommendations that:

1. Make technical edits to history and social study standards of learning and associated curriculum frameworks.
2. Design new model curricula for AAPI, Indigenous and Latino history elective courses in secondary schools.
3. Help develop culturally competent professional development.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/virginia/new-virginia-african-american-history-course-elective-school-course/65-f7c6ad32-a597-4b5d-834f-42d372039efb>

<sup>2</sup> VDOE, History & Social Science Standards of Learning Resources

([https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/history\\_socialscience/index.shtml](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/history_socialscience/index.shtml)). Courses included in analysis: Kindergarten, 1, 2, Virginia Studies, US History to 1865, US History 1865 to Present, Civic & Economics, VA & US History, VA & US Gov

**The Need:** Few Virginia history standards discuss AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino American communities. Regardless of race, including these groups in our curricula can have an empowering impact on all students and equip students for success in an increasingly globalized economy.

*Improved Academics:* A wealth of information suggests that inclusive curricula can improve academic performance. The National Education Association has concluded that students in ethnic study classes are more “academically engaged” and experience “stronger sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment”.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, national studies featured in the American Educational Research Journal suggest that ethnic study curricula can lead to higher graduation rates, standardized test scores, math achievement, and GPAs among minority students.<sup>4</sup>

*Increasingly Diverse Student Bodies:* Virginia’s Asian American, Pacific Islander, Indigenous and Latino American populations are rapidly growing. According to the latest census data, AAPI, Indigenous and Latino Americans now compose more than a quarter of Virginia’s population. Virginia’s history, policy, and economic development can’t be explained fully without including these groups.

*Preparing Students For The Future:* In today’s globalized economy, it’s likely that a student will interact with various cultures in their day to day job. Building cultural competence is crucial to ensuring that Commonwealth students are equipped with the skills needed to handle our globalized economy. A majority of Americans recognize this. In 2020, upwards of 60 percent of Americans felt they did not receive “enough education” about AAPI, Indigenous and Latino Americans, according to polling from Axios.<sup>5</sup>

### **Common Misconceptions:**

*HB 1179 Requires Students To Take An AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino Classes:* HB 1179 develops electives on AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino history. However, HB 1179 does not mandate that students take AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino history courses.

*We Already Teach AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino History:* Though social study and history course curriculums do include references to AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino history, representation is incomplete. Indigenous people are rarely mentioned post-1865. Moreover, key events and figures are notably absent in history curriculums, including 20th century immigration quotas, the Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese Internment Camps, Korematsu v. United States, Braceros program, the American GI Forum, Zoot Suit riots, and the vibrant contributions provided by all Virginian AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino communities.

*Teaching AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino History Is Decisive:* AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino history do not assert that any one race, ethnicity, or person is superior to another. Rather, they explore the vibrant contributions minority communities have provided to our Commonwealth and the United States. Moreover, studies suggest that teaching minority history can bridge racial divides: a meta-analysis of thirty studies found that ethnic courses could reduce racial attitudes, regardless of race.<sup>6</sup>

*AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino History Shouldn’t Be Separate Courses:* As students, we understand that our social study teachers are already expected to cover an extraordinary amount of content. Our current curriculums do not have the space to explore the incredibly diverse histories of the AAPI, Indigenous, and Latino communities.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/what-research-says-about-ethnic-studies>

<sup>4</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.3102/0002831216677002>, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.3102/0002831214553705>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.axios.com/education-schools-race-inequity-poll-1a1af17b-8a8a-460e-921e-ae99e30c493.html>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241652738\\_Does\\_Multicultural\\_Education\\_Improve\\_Students'\\_Racial\\_Attitudes\\_Implications\\_for\\_Closing\\_the\\_Achievement\\_Gap](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241652738_Does_Multicultural_Education_Improve_Students'_Racial_Attitudes_Implications_for_Closing_the_Achievement_Gap)