

Testimony in Support: HB 2440 Establishment of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Commission

Donna Tan

Tuesday, January 31st, 2023

Dear Chair Gilbert and distinguished members of the Rules Committee,

Thank you so much for your time. My name is Donna Tan. I've been a resident of Gainesville, Virginia for 6 years and lived in Ashburn and Alexandria (total of another 6 years) and am a parent of 2 children. Today, I am proudly writing in favor of HB 2440.

Growing up, I always wondered in world history class, majority of the book was about European History and when it came to Asian History, there were 2 paragraphs. There was a lack of knowledge across the board, students generalizing all asians as ching chongs who's parents own takeout restaurants. Present day, my kids, as they grow up in this VA school system, ask me questions why some kids just assumed they were Japanese or Vietnamese, why can't they ask us nicely or why do they laugh at our lunches. They tell me that it is frustrating sometimes to feel the need to explain what race they are and does it really even matter? I don't blame them. Their parents might not have the knowledge, hence they didn't educate their children about different people and their cultures.

During the pandemic, I was looked at very rudely in the grocery store. Because I was asian. I wasn't assuming. A older man told his partner that they should wait for this Chinese lady to pass, while holding their mask tighter and stares at me. My sister's friend got harassed at a grocery store after work by to big men with racial slurs. This still happens.

Including Asian American history and culture in classrooms is important because sharing this knowledge helps more people understand who were are and that we are all different and we are are still all Americans. Our culture is rich and colorful. It helps us understand who we are as a nation. So much of

Asian culture build strong family values, emphasis on education, preserving traditions, and valuing personal relationships.

With the ongoing increase in anti-Asian American bullying, hate, and violence, we need to act urgently in using education as a solution in ensuring the public safety of our communities.

Please favorably vote HB 2440 out of the Rules Committee with haste. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Donna Tan
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