

March 23, 2023

Chair Cheryl Youakim
House Education Finance—120 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Youakim and members of the House Education Finance Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council) submits this letter in support of H.F. 1502, offered by Representative S. Sencer-Mura, to establish that state social studies standards include ethnic studies.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota's API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly urge the passage of H.F. 1502.

As one of the state's three ethnic councils, the Council is privileged to be active within our immigrant and refugee communities. In Minnesota alone, there are over 60 distinct communities of Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic or national origin. These communities have grown from approximately 40,000 individuals in 1985, or about one percent of Minnesota's population according to estimates by MDH, to over 367,000 today, or about 6.5 percent of the state's total population. The United States, and Minnesota, are undeniably richer and more vibrant for the contributions of these new Minnesotans, but the state has been slow to recognize and adapt to the changing makeup of our communities.

This bill offers a concrete way to acknowledge and celebrate the breadth, depth, and diversity of Minnesotans today while supporting academic success. As communities such as ours grow and form an increasingly integral component of our society, it is appropriate for schools to adapt their social studies curriculum to reflect current society. Not only will this bring school curriculums into alignment with the reality of communities, but students will become more fully engaged in their academic work as they see themselves in the history of their state and nation. In this way, this bill will accomplish both an academic and civic purpose in the education of our students.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill and urge its adoption to strengthen the academic future of students and reflect the vibrant diversity of our state today and into the future.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans