

Testimony for LD 957
April 22, 2025
Augusta, Maine - State House

Good afternoon Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to support the AANHPI community and LD 957.

My name is Kimberly Smith and I live in Edgecomb with my Asian American daughter YuJi, who was adopted from China. I passionately and strongly support LD 957.

LD 957 is important to me as I have personally witnessed my daughter experiencing racism and being othered many times during her young life and increasingly so since COVID. She has experienced bullying in the following forms: stereotypical Asian eye gesture, fake Chinese talk and writing, line cutting labeled as 'Chinese cutting', a young photo of her being called a monkey, being called 'colored', and being run away from on the playground repeatedly whilst everyone else plays the 'Chinese Flu' tag game. Also, twice whilst walking with my daughter, I heard a passerby say quietly in my ear "my country, not hers".

We have all seen the rise of Anti Asian bullying, violence and racism since COVID and my concern is with the current national politics of othering, this situation is only going to get worse. I believe that the teaching of AANHPI history offers a long term preventative measure against Anti Asian American bullying, hate and violence. In my opinion, educating the youth of Maine, in this inclusive format, will ameliorate othering and racism, thus I wholeheartedly support this bill.

I sincerely and emphatically urge the Committee to favorably vote LD 957 out of Committee.

I would like to thank the Committee for your time and for hearing my testimony. Thank you.