



Testimony in Support of LD 957: An Act to Integrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander History into the Statewide System of Learning Results

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Marpheen Chann, and I'm speaking in support of LD 957, a bill that would ensure the inclusion of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) history in Maine's statewide learning standards.

As a Cambodian American and lifelong Mainer, I know what it feels like to grow up without seeing your family's story reflected in the classroom. Just last week, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Cambodian genocide, one that saw over 2 million people perish at the hands of Cambodian communists. I know the silence that falls when certain histories are left out.

Students in Maine deserve to see the full picture. AANHPI communities have been part of the American story for centuries—building railroads, fighting in wars, growing businesses, advocating for civil rights, and raising families right here in New England. Yet too often, these stories are left out of the curriculum. Including them is not about pushing an agenda—it's about teaching the facts.

We also know from research and experience that when students learn about cultures and communities beyond their own, they're more likely to grow into empathetic, thoughtful citizens. In a time where polarization, misinformation, and division are on the rise, education can and should be a powerful tool for connection. Teaching AANHPI history is a small but meaningful way to build bridges and promote understanding in our schools and communities.

LD 957 is a clear, focused step forward. It doesn't impose new mandates or overhaul local control. What it does is ensure that AANHPI history is acknowledged in the same way we already recognize other essential aspects of our national story. It provides educators with the guidance and support they need to teach this content well, without adding unnecessary burdens.

This bill reflects Maine values—truth, dignity, respect for our neighbors, and a deep belief in education as a public good.

LD 957 is about inclusion, not division. It's about equipping our young people with knowledge, not ideology. And it's about making sure no one feels invisible in the story of America.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 957. Thank you for your time and your commitment to Maine's students and communities.

Sincerely,

Marpheen Chann  
Executive Director, Khmer Maine

*Thank you!*