

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

Good afternoon Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy, and distinguished members of the committee.

My name is YuJi Smith. I am an Asian adoptee and I live in Edgecomb. Also, I am a tenth grader at Waynflete School, am a Board Member of the Chinese American Friendship Association of Maine and a National Act to Change Youth Ambassador. I support this bill.

LD 957 is important to me because according to the US Census, Edgecomb is the most rural community in the whitest county, in the whitest state in the country. While there has been some mention of Asian contributions in my high school history classes, there is not a mandatory Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander curriculum. I believe that there should be more Asian American Hawaiian Pacific Islander studies in K-12 schools. Having Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander studies in schools will help students learn about events important to Asian American history and our collective history in general. This would foster inclusivity in our youth so no Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander will have to face racism as I did during COVID, and even before.

In elementary school, my class was working on a family tree project and one of my classmates saw a young photo of me. He told me that I looked like a monkey.

Including Asian American history in classrooms is crucial. Learning about Asian American history in schools will help other Asian adoptees like me learn to accept their identity. Learning about Asian American history will make all students realize how Asian Americans made an impact.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 957 and move it out of committee with haste.

Thank you for your time and for listening to my testimony.