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ACR-18 School curriculum: Asian American history and contributions. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 18

CHAPTER 106

Relative to school curriculum.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 23, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 18, Mike Fong. School curriculum: Asian American history and contributions.

This measure would urge all schools to ensure that Asian American history and contributions are included in their curriculum, alongside those of other communities of color.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The State of California has the largest population and the second highest percentage of Asian Americans in the United States; and

WHEREAS, United States Census data show that Asians are the fastest growing ethnic group in California; and

WHEREAS, The Asian American population in California is comprised of over 20 ethnic subgroups, representing diverse countries of origin and over 50 languages, histories, and cultural backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Data from multiple research studies demonstrate the value of diverse populations in strengthening democracy, promoting equity, and expanding opportunity for more people; and

WHEREAS, Asians and Asian Americans have made rich contributions to the history of the United States and California, including Chinese immigrants who risked their lives to build the transcontinental railroads in the 1800s and Japanese Americans who fought for America in multiple wars, yet faced backlash and discrimination through laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans have made significant individual and community contributions to the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the United States, including advancing civil rights for all people, as demonstrated by Filipino American labor leader Larry Itliong, who fought for the rights of farmworkers in the central valley in the mid-1900s; and

WHEREAS, Despite the contributions and history of Asian Americans in the United States, Asian Americans continue to be targets of hate, violence, and discrimination. Most recently, hate incidents and hate crimes against Asian Americans spiked dramatically, with nearly 11,500 hate incidents reported to the Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center from March 19, 2020, to March 31, 2022, inclusive, driven largely by xenophobia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 101 of the 2021–22 Regular Session, authored by Assembly Member Jose Medina, and Assembly Bill 1460 of the 2019–20 Regular Session, authored by Assembly Member Shirley Weber, into law, making ethnic studies a high school and California State University graduation requirement in order to give pupils and students the opportunity to learn about the histories, stories, and contributions of historically marginalized peoples to American society; and

WHEREAS, Asian American representation in educational materials and media contributes to a more inclusive learning environment for all pupils and students, which affirms Asian Americans' place in society and combats harmful stereotypes, such as the model minority and perpetual foreigner stereotypes; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature urges all schools to ensure that Asian American history and contributions are included in their curriculum, alongside those of other communities of color; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.