



Chinese American Service League

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July 9, 2021

Dear Friends,

Our state made history as the Illinois General Assembly passed the Teaching Equitable Asian American Community History (TEAACH) Act with bipartisan support. We applaud the bill's cosponsors, State Representative Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, and State Senator Ram Villivalam, and to the members of the Asian American, Hispanic, and Black caucuses for their leadership. We also express our profound gratitude to Governor Pritzker for signing this bill into law today. Illinois is now the first state in the union to require a unit of curriculum in public schools on the AAPI experience, including the community's history in Illinois and the Midwest.

The vast, rich culture and history of the AAPI community is scarce in public school programming. With this law, future generations of students will learn about the legacies and contributions of the AAPI experience throughout history. The lack of representation leads to misunderstanding and miseducation, but teaching AAPI history lays the foundation for a more racially equitable future and creates empathy from understanding each other's history. For AAPI students, the TEAACH Act provides a chance to hear the stories of influential individuals that reflect their individual experiences. Importantly, it now sends a powerful message to all AAPI communities that we belong in this country. The TEAACH Act provides a stronger foundation for understanding AAPI community's struggles and successes while dispelling the myth that Asian American Pacific Islanders are perpetual foreigners.

While the TEAACH Act was a significant victory when Governor Pritzker signed the legislation into law, it is only one step toward a more equitable and just future. We hope that this action paves the way for future legislation in Illinois, in other states, and at the federal level. We express optimism that the law will support a diverse approach in addressing stereotypes, ignorance, dispelling the model minority myth, and combating hate and violence.

CASL would like to thank Governor J.B. Pritzker again for signing this bill into law today. We look forward to productive conversations on race and equity with our neighbors from all communities, especially our allies, who share so many of the same challenges and values. We know that only by working together will we be able to tackle the biggest challenges that minority communities face, and together, we can create a brighter and more equitable future for all.

Yours in service,

Paul Luu
CEO, Chinese American Service League