



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

Senator Liu introduces legislation requiring all public schools to provide instruction in Asian American history

JOHN C. LIU April 26, 2021

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SENATOR LIU INTRODUCES LEGISLATION REQUIRING ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTION IN ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Albany, NY - Amid the alarming rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans in New York and across the nation, state senators have introduced legislation S.6359 requiring New York State public elementary and high schools to provide instruction in the history and civic impact of Asian Americans. The bill seeks to raise awareness of Asian Americans by directing the Board of Regents to develop a course of study incorporating the contributions, struggles, and accomplishments of Asian-Americans throughout the history of this nation. The bill also directs the State Commissioner of Education to provide technical assistance in the development of curricula on Asian American history and civic impact and to provide suitable course materials.

The senate bill is being sponsored by senators Jeremy Cooney, Andrew Gounardes, Brian Kavanagh, John Liu, Toby Ann Stavisky and Kevin Thomas. Assembly members Ron Kim and Yuh-Line Niou will introduce the bill in the Assembly this week.

Curriculum in New York State schools is often devoid of content related to the impact of Asian Americans on the history and culture of our state and the country at large, and the discrimination they have faced in the United States. A lack of understanding and knowledge of Asian Americans has contributed to a recent increase in violence and hate crimes against people of Asian descent, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation would ensure that students in New York State schools are taught about the historical contributions of Asian Americans, which will foster respect and understanding of Asian Americans, and allow Asian American students to see themselves reflected as an important part of the history and culture of our state and country.

Senator John Liu said, "Asian-Americans have long been caught between the pernicious perpetual foreigner syndrome and the seemingly-benign but truly destructive model minority myth. That my preceding sentence requires a long explanation to most people clearly illustrates the omission of Asian-American presence in the teaching of American

history and related topics in our public schools. Amid the onslaught of anti-Asian hate, assault, and killings, this legislation is necessary to remove the cloak of invisibility that Asian-Americans have long endured in order to truly achieve equal opportunity, equal treatment, and equal protection. Only then can Asian-Americans experience safety and security in the long run.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “The story of the importance Asian Americans as part of American history has been ignored for too long. The significant impact of the Asian American community should be taught in our schools. It is time we create a more well-rounded and inclusive curriculum that better represents everyone who helped build this country and move our society forward. I speak from the perspective of a former high school social studies teacher.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “Asian Americans are an important part of the rich history and culture of our state and country. As our community responds to rising anti-Asian sentiment fueled by political rhetoric, it is critical that we educate our young people to recognize our shared history and promote equity in the classroom and beyond. As the first Indian-American to be elected to the New York State Senate, I am proud to support this legislation, which will ensure that students in New York State schools are taught about the vast and important historical contributions of Asian Americans.”

Senator Jeremy Cooney said, “Asian leaders and people have made an impact on America for much of its history. This bill will lift up the Asian voices and stories of those who have contributed to our state and our nation, including in Rochester. As the first Asian in Upstate New York to be elected to state office, I know that representation matters to all New Yorkers. I want to thank my colleague Sen. Liu for introducing this legislation which will enrich public education for future generations.”

“Asian Americans are an invaluable part of the American fabric, and have played an integral role in shaping the history of our country,” said **Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “But sadly, the telling of the Asian-American experience is absent from our schools. Amid the rise in anti-Asian discrimination and hate over the past year, it’s more crucial than ever that we make sure our children learn about the wealth of contributions Asian-Americans have made to our nation's history. I'm proud to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation, because we can't whitewash over the stories of people who helped build our country and make us who we are today.”

“Asian Americans have helped shape every aspect of our country. This rich and diverse history includes countless groundbreaking contributions in the arts, science, business, government, and elsewhere,” said **Senator Brian Kavanagh**, who represents Chinatown. “Ensuring that this history is given the place that it warrants in the curriculum of our schools is long past due. And it’s never been more important than it is now, as we work to confront and end the generations of ignorance and negative stereotyping that have undoubtedly played a role in anti-Asian racism and violence.”

Assembly Member Ron Kim said, “Asian Americans are as much a part of the fabric of our country as any other community in America. This legislation will ensure that students in New York understand the history, contributions, and sacrifices of our community and help them understand our essential place in this country. I look forward to working with Senator Liu to pass this bill in our respective chambers.”

Assembly Member Yuh-line Niou said, “Even before the onset of the pandemic, we've witnessed firsthand an unprecedented level of violence and hate towards Asian Americans. This legislation proposes to incorporate the historical contributions of Asian Americans to New York's education curriculum. This is a critical first step to ensure our children will have a greater understanding of diversity and inclusion, and of how history shows our belonging.

I am hopeful this legislation will support our efforts to move towards a more compassionate, inclusive, and welcoming community for all. I am proud to be a co-sponsor on this bill and thank my colleagues for joining me in sponsoring this bill.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S6359

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires public elementary and high schools to provide instruction in Asian American history and civic impact

April 23, 2021

In Senate Committee [Education](#)

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Do you support this bill?