

SENATE, No. 3764

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Senator LORETTA WEINBERG

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Senators Diegnan, Greenstein, T.Kean, Ruiz, Singleton, Schepisi,
Thompson, Codey, Gill and Turner**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Commission on Asian Heritage in DOE.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/16/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the Commission on Asian Heritage and
2 supplementing chapter 4 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. The 2010 United States Census estimated that there were
9 approximately 17.3 million Asian Americans residing in the United
10 States, or roughly 5.6 percent of the nation's population, with the
11 largest subgroups being Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans,
12 Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans, and
13 Japanese Americans.

14 b. According to the census, almost three-quarters of all Asian
15 Americans live in just 10 states (California, New York, Texas, New
16 Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois, Washington, Florida, Virginia, and
17 Pennsylvania). In fact, only two states, Hawaii and California, had a
18 higher percentage of Asian Americans in their total populations
19 than New Jersey.

20 c. By 2016, in its estimate of the nation's population, the
21 census bureau estimated that the population of Asian Americans
22 had grown to approximately 21 million.

23 d. New Jersey is home to a significant number of people of
24 Asian descent. According to the most recent American Community
25 Survey, the Asian population of New Jersey is 9.4 percent of the
26 total population of the State, significantly higher than the national
27 percentage.

28 e. The histories of our nation and our State have been
29 significantly enriched by the heritage of people of Asian descent.
30 Our nation and our State have benefitted substantially from the
31 influences and contributions of these men, women, and children and
32 their culture, history, and heritage.

33 f. It is desirable to educate our citizens about the positive
34 aspects of the culture, music, art, language, history, and people of
35 Asian heritage.

36 g. It is the policy of the State of New Jersey that the culture,
37 history, and heritage of people of Asian descent are a proper
38 concern for all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools
39 of the State.

40 h. It is appropriate and desirable that programs, workshops,
41 institutes, seminars, and other teacher-training activities for the
42 study of the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian
43 descent be conducted at the high schools and institutions of higher
44 education in this State.

45 i. It is fitting and proper to establish a permanent State-level
46 commission to survey, design, encourage, and promote the
47 implementation of Asian cultural and educational programs in this
48 State, with responsibility for the coordination of events that will

1 provide appropriate awareness and memorialization of the culture,
2 history, heritage, and language of people of Asian descent on a
3 regular basis throughout the State.

4
5 2. a. The Commission on Asian Heritage is created and
6 established in the Executive Branch of the State Government. For
7 the purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section
8 IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the commission is
9 allocated within the Department of Education, but notwithstanding
10 this allocation, the commission shall be independent of any
11 supervision or control by the department or any board or officer
12 thereof.

13 The commission shall consist of 21 members, including the
14 Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee, the chair of
15 the executive board of the Presidents' Council, ex officio, or a
16 designee, and 19 public members.

17 Public members shall be appointed as follows: five public
18 members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, at least
19 one of whom shall have a Masters' degree in an area of Asian
20 studies or culture; five public members shall be appointed by the
21 Speaker of the General Assembly, at least one of whom shall have a
22 Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies or culture; and nine
23 public members shall be appointed by the Governor, no less than
24 four of whom shall at the time of their appointment have at least a
25 Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies or culture. The public
26 members shall be residents of the State who have served
27 prominently as spokespersons for, or as leaders of, organizations in
28 the Asian heritage community which serve members of religious,
29 ethnic, national heritage, or social groups or who are experienced in
30 the field of Asian heritage education. To the greatest extent
31 practicable, they shall be chosen with due regard to provide the
32 commission with broad regional representation and ethnic diversity.
33 At least one-half of the public members shall be of Asian descent.

34 b. Each public member of the commission shall serve for a
35 term of three years, except that of the initial members appointed:
36 one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one member
37 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and two
38 members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one
39 year; two members appointed by the President of the Senate, two
40 members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and
41 three members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of
42 two years; and two members appointed by the President of the
43 Senate, two members appointed by the Speaker of the General
44 Assembly, and four members appointed by the Governor shall serve
45 for terms of three years. Public members shall be eligible for
46 reappointment and shall serve until their successors are appointed
47 and qualified. The term of the successor of any incumbent shall be
48 calculated from the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A

1 vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in
2 the same manner as the original appointment, but for the unexpired
3 term only.

4 c. The members of the commission shall serve without
5 compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all
6 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

7 d. The commission annually shall elect a chairperson from
8 among its members. It shall meet upon the call of the chair or of a
9 majority of the commission members. The presence of a majority
10 of the authorized membership of the commission shall be required
11 for the conduct of official business.

12 e. The commission shall appoint an executive director, who
13 shall serve at its pleasure and shall be a person qualified by training
14 and experience to perform the duties of the office.

15

16 3. The commission shall have the following responsibilities
17 and duties:

18 a. To provide, based upon the collective knowledge and
19 experience of its members, assistance and advice to the public and
20 nonpublic schools of this State with respect to the implementation
21 of cultural and educational programs concerning people of Asian
22 descent;

23 b. To meet with county and local school officials and other
24 interested public and private organizations, for the purpose of
25 assisting with the planning, coordination, or modification of courses
26 of study dealing with issues, matters and subjects concerning or
27 relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian
28 descent;

29 c. To survey and catalog the extent and breadth of Asian
30 heritage cultural awareness and educational programs presently
31 being incorporated into the curricula and taught in the school
32 systems of this State; to inventory those Asian heritage exhibits and
33 resources which may be incorporated into courses of study at
34 various locations throughout the State and, upon request, to assist
35 the Department of Education and other educational agencies in the
36 development and implementation of Asian heritage cultural
37 awareness and educational programs. In furtherance of this
38 responsibility, the commission shall be authorized to contact and
39 cooperate with existing Asian heritage public or private nonprofit
40 resource organizations and may act as a liaison concerning issues
41 and topics involving and relating to the culture, history, and
42 heritage of Asians to members of the United States Senate and
43 House of Representatives, and the New Jersey Senate and General
44 Assembly;

45 d. To compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing
46 to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars,
47 and workshops on subjects concerning and relating to the culture,
48 history, and heritage of people of Asian descent. These volunteers

1 may be scholars, clergymen, community relations professionals, and
2 other persons who, by virtue of their experience, training, or
3 interest, have acquired personal or academic knowledge of the
4 culture, history, and heritage of Asians and who are willing to share
5 that knowledge with students and teachers;

6 e. To coordinate events observing the culture, history, and
7 heritage of people of Asian descent and to seek volunteers who are
8 willing and able to participate in commemorative events that will
9 enhance student awareness of the significance of the culture,
10 history, and heritage of Asians;

11 f. To prepare reports for the Governor and the Legislature
12 regarding its findings and recommendations to facilitate the
13 inclusion of Asian heritage studies and special programs
14 memorializing the culture, history, and heritage of Asians in the
15 educational system of this State; and

16 g. To develop, in consultation with the Department of
17 Education, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of subjects and
18 topics concerning and relating to the culture, history, and heritage
19 of people of Asian descent. To the greatest extent practicable, each
20 board of education shall incorporate those guidelines as part of the
21 curriculum for its district's elementary and secondary school
22 students.

23
24 4. a. The commission is authorized to call upon any
25 department, office, division, or agency of the State, or of any
26 county, municipality, or school district of the State, to supply such
27 data, program reports and other information, personnel, and
28 assistance as it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities
29 under this act.

30 b. These departments, offices, divisions, and agencies shall, to
31 the extent possible, and not inconsistent with any other law of this
32 State, cooperate with the commission and shall furnish it with such
33 information, personnel, and assistance as may be necessary or
34 helpful to accomplish the purposes of this act.

35
36 5. This act shall take effect immediately.
37
38

39 STATEMENT

40
41 This bill establishes the Commission on Asian Heritage within
42 the Department of Education. Notwithstanding its allocation, the
43 commission is independent of any supervision or control by the
44 department. The purpose of the commission is to survey, design,
45 encourage, and promote the implementation of Asian cultural and
46 educational programs in this State.

- 1 Under the bill, the commission will:
- 2 • provide assistance and advice to the public and nonpublic
3 schools of the State with respect to the implementation of
4 cultural and educational programs concerning people of
5 Asian descent;
 - 6 • meet with county and local school officials and other
7 interested public and private organizations for the purpose of
8 assisting with the planning, coordination, or modification of
9 courses of study dealing with issues, matters, and subjects
10 concerning or relating to the culture, history, and heritage of
11 people of Asian descent;
 - 12 • survey and catalog the extent and breadth of Asian heritage
13 cultural awareness and educational programs presently being
14 incorporated into the curricula and taught in the school
15 systems of the State;
 - 16 • compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to
17 share their knowledge and experience in classrooms,
18 seminars, and workshops on subjects concerning and relating
19 to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian
20 descent; and
 - 21 • coordinate events observing the culture, history, and heritage
22 of people of Asian descent and seek volunteers who are
23 willing and able to participate in commemorative events that
24 will enhance student awareness of the significance of the
25 culture, history, and heritage of Asians.
- 26 The commission will consist of 21 members, including the
27 Commissioner of Education and the chair of the executive board of
28 the Presidents' Council, ex officio, or their designees, and 19 public
29 members, including: five members appointed by the President of the
30 Senate, at least one of whom has a Masters' degree in an area of
31 Asian studies or culture; five members appointed by the Speaker of
32 the General Assembly, at least one of whom has a Masters' degree
33 in an area of Asian studies or culture; and nine members appointed
34 by the Governor, no less than four of whom have, at the time of
35 their appointment, at least a Masters' degree in an area of Asian
36 studies or culture. The public members are required to be residents
37 of the State who have served prominently as spokespersons for, or
38 as leaders of, organizations in the Asian heritage community which
39 serve members of religious, ethnic, national heritage, or social
40 groups or who are experienced in the field of Asian heritage
41 education. At least one-half of the public members must be of
42 Asian descent.