

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3764

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 16, 2021

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 3764 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the Commission on Asian American Heritage within the Department of Education. Notwithstanding its allocation, the commission is independent of any supervision or control by the department. The purpose of the commission is to survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of historical, cultural, and educational programs concerning people of Asian and Asian American descent in this State.

Under the bill, the commission will:

- provide assistance and advice to the public and nonpublic schools of the State with respect to the implementation of cultural and educational programs concerning people of Asian and Asian American descent;
- meet with county and local school officials and other interested public and private organizations for the purpose of assisting with the planning, coordination, or modification of courses of study dealing with issues, matters, and subjects concerning or relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian and Asian American descent;
- survey and catalog the extent and breadth of Asian and Asian American heritage cultural awareness and educational programs presently being incorporated into the curricula and taught in the school systems of the State;
- compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars, and workshops on subjects concerning and relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian and Asian American descent; and
- coordinate events observing the culture, history, and heritage of people of Asian and Asian American descent and seek volunteers who are willing and able to participate in commemorative events that will enhance student awareness of the significance of the culture, history, and heritage of Asians and Asian Americans.

The commission will consist of 21 members, including the Commissioner of Education and the chair of the executive board of the Presidents' Council, ex officio, or their designees, and 19 public members, including: five members appointed by the President of the Senate, at least one of whom has a Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies, Asian American studies, or related disciplines; five members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, at least one of whom has a Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies, Asian American studies, or related disciplines; and nine members appointed by the Governor, no less than four of whom have, at the time of their appointment, at least a Masters' degree in an area of Asian studies, Asian American studies, or related disciplines. The public members are required to be residents of the State who have served prominently as spokespersons for, or as leaders of, organizations in the Asian or Asian American heritage community which serve members of religious, ethnic, national heritage, or social groups or who are experienced in the field of Asian or Asian American heritage education. At least one-half of the public members must be of Asian or Asian American descent.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

(1) update language throughout the bill to include reference to persons of Asian American descent, in addition to persons of Asian descent; and

(2) provide that the commission's responsibilities and duties include infusing the history of Asian Americans in the social studies curriculum and ensuring that New Jersey teachers are equipped to effectively teach the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.