



ARISE

April 23rd, 2025

House Bill 5836 – “Our History, Our Schools, Our Future: About Ethnic Studies Bill”

Dear Chair McNamara and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Anthony and I am a Youth Leader at ARISE. I am writing to support House Bill No. 5836 because I believe that my family's history, and every other ethnic group's history, should be heard, rather than silenced. Ethnic Studies is the academic field of other histories, cultures, and experiences from various racial and ethnic groups through the lens of identity formation, intersectionality, and belonging. Its courses and subjects educate people on the diverse aspects of the world, not only limiting the histories to a certain racial group. It's important for people to understand their own histories, some not even knowing about their own origins, and never being taught through their relatives, nor in schools.

As an Asian-American with Cambodian parents who have come to America due to the Khmer Rouge and mass genocides, I have felt that my parents' purpose of coming to America should be heard by many, and should not be hidden away. As I grew up, I had never known about my own history, nor where I actually came from. I always knew about how I came from Cambodian descent, however, I was never taught my own history. I felt oppressed and faced racist remarks from my classmates, being a minority within the school grounds. Whether it was within Providence schools, or my current school, I felt as if I was surrounded by those superior to me. I was confused whenever I went to school every year, learning about the history of Europe, but never my own. Many other places have their histories left out as well, people from those areas not feeling connected to the histories they were taught in classes.

I believe that everyone should know their own origins, and their parents shouldn't be the only ones teaching them theirs and other histories. Ethnic Studies would allow students to learn the stories of their own heritage, along with other historical cultures. I encourage you to pass this bill as our histories should not be self-taught, and rather be brought to us through our education systems.

Thank you,

Anthony
10th Grade