



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 Breylon, I am a freshman and I am a Youth Leader at ARISE. I am writing to support House Bill No. 5836 because I believe that it'll have a great impact for me, my classmates, and my schools to have an Ethnic Studies course statewide in our schools. Having an Ethnic Studies course in our schools would promote cultural awareness, inclusivity, and a deeper understanding of diverse histories through the lens of different cultures, and the real experiences of people from all backgrounds. It would foster empathy, reduce biases, and engage students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. As a Cambodian boy, I wasn't taught much about my culture and my identity when I was younger, I was only taught about it by my family. It had shocked me when I found out that schools didn't teach about things such as my culture, history, and my identity. Not being able to learn about my culture/identity made me believe that the school system has failed me and people of color. Overall, Ethnic Studies would help build a more informed and united community. In addition, having more teachers of color in schools statewide would make me, my family, and my community proud of the change. Having more teachers of color would give us greater representation, support, and role models for the community. Families would feel more connected, and communities would benefit from schools having more teachers of color, creating more opportunities for us and the generations to come. This bill matters to me because it gives us a step towards equity, giving all students statewide a more accurate and comprehensive education.

Thank you,

Breylon
9th grade