

Testimony SB 280
March 14, 2017

Dear Chair Robian and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Betty Jean Lee, born and raised in Portland, OR nearly 83 years ago, and serve as Regional Executive for the National Chinese American Citizens Alliance and Secretary of the Portland Lodge. I attended Grant High School, and the U of Oregon in the late 40's and early 50's. My husband and I raised three children who also attended schools in Oregon. Sadly, the curriculum in the schools did not teach much history of people of color especially Chinese Americans. Some 20 years ago, I took my granddaughter to an exhibit that was in Portland from the Smithsonian. It was showing the public history of the western part of the U.S. After going through the exhibit, I asked my granddaughter who was around 10-11, what was missing? She didn't know until I asked, "who helped build the railroad?" How could this piece of history have been forgotten?

SB 280 is seeking funding for Oregon Social Studies to be inclusive of all Oregonians. Together we can ensure that Oregon students learn about the history and incredible contributions of Chinese Americans and communities of color whose stories seldom make it to the history books.

The C.A.C.A. National was established in 1895. Our Portland Lodge is 96 years old, and is one of 18 lodges in the U.S. Our local lodge focuses on three areas of service:

Youth scholarships awards, interscholastic basketball, Asian American Youth Leadership Conference for high school students

Civic engagement and education on historical and current civil rights

Community service for the underserved seniors and families through partnership with the Asian Health & Service Center

Passing this bill will certainly help us in building a better community along with passing on history to the next generation. Thank you for this opportunity.