

SB 280

March 14, 2017

Dear Chair Robian and members of the Senate Committee on Education

My name is Kent Lee. I'm the president of the Portland Chapter of the Chinese American Citizens' Alliance. I'm here in support of SB 280 seeking funding for Oregon Social Studies to be inclusive of all Oregonians.

I am a third generation Chinese American and was educated through the Portland Public School System. My history teachers said that our country is a melting pot of cultures. And this is what helped to make our country great. And that was it. I don't recall learning any history of the different ethnicities our country.

I learned about the Chinese history in this country from my parents and grand parents. I also have a Japanese uncle whose family was placed in an internment camp during WWII. He told me that the camp living conditions were poor, and one of his brothers fell ill and died in that camp because of the poor medical care. I've heard the story's from Japanese American's who willingly joined and served in our US military during WWII; to prove that they were good Americans citizens willing to die for our country. Can you imagine what it's like to fight for a country that holds your family in an internment camp? And I don't think this was unique to the Japanese community. I suspect that members of the German American and Italian American communities suffered too.

Learning about the history of the various ethnic people in our country will help to stimulate cultural sensitivity. And if our citizens aren't aware of this history we risk repeating the mistakes of the past. We can read, watch, and listen to the national news of today and wonder if history will repeat itself.

Please support SB 280 to help provide the resources needed to train our educators and thus our students who will become the future leaders of our state and country.

Sincerely,

Kent Lee
11438 SW Artesa Ct.
Portland, OR 97225

503-780-1925