

Hmong American + Asian American Education Comms Toolkit

Currently ([Assembly Bill #232](#) / [Senate Bill #240](#))

Relating to: Directing school boards to provide instruction on Hmong Americans and Asian Americans.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau:

Current law requires each school board to provide an instructional program designed to give pupils an understanding of human relations, particularly with regard to American Indians, Black Americans, and Hispanics. This bill directs school boards to include in that instructional program information related to understanding human relations with regard to Hmong Americans and Asian Americans.

Hmong Americans comprise the largest Asian American population in Wisconsin.

- This bipartisan legislation will ensure that the experiences of Hmong Americans and Asian Americans are always given the attention and inclusion they deserve in our public schools by making a very simple change to state statute.
- By 2044, the U.S. Census predicts that over half of the nation's population will be people of color, so this trend will likely continue. As such, in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society, it's vital that culturally responsive instruction is in the classroom.
- Inclusion, cultural awareness, and multiculturalism benefit all students.
- Diversity in instruction means that all students are better prepared to be productive citizens in an increasingly changing world. This broader instruction will expose Wisconsin children to varying points of view and real-life.

* "Asian Americans" refers to those persons who trace their origins and ancestries back to the the countries of East Asia (such as China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea), Southeast Asia (such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma/Myanmar, Philippines), South Asia (such as India and Pakistan), or the Pacific Islands. Asian Americans have lived and worked in Wisconsin for over 100 years, and have greatly contributed to our state's history, culture, economy, and public service.

Social Media Captions

- Our children deserve to know their story, the story of their peers, and the story of Wisconsin. I am proud to be part of a bipartisan effort to include instructional program information on Hmong Americans and Asian Americans into Wisconsin educational curricula.
- The heritage of Hmong Americans and Asian Americans is integral to the fabric of Wisconsin. Join me in working to make sure that our education system includes, celebrates, and honors this heritage.
- All children deserve to learn in a classroom that is inclusive. I am honored to support a historic bill that directs school boards to provide instruction on Hmong Americans and Asian Americans. We must schedule this bill for a public hearing.

Graphics

You can print the postcard graphic, color it, and write your own personal note to your public officials. We suggest printing postcards on cardstock paper.

For access to pdf or png files of this postcard and graphic, please click the following links:

[Teach AA History Postcard Adobe pdf](#)

[Teach AA History Postcard PNG files](#)



MANY THANKS TO OUR COLLEAGUES & ALLIES FOR ADVOCATING FOR AB 232/SB 240!
A wonderful coalition of AAPI, non-AAPI allies, K-12 and university educators, students, parents, and community organizations have come together by sending postcards, writing letters to and talking with legislators, sending written testimony, speaking at the Assembly and Senate Public Hearings, and sharing with your communities!

These are the historic milestones:

- April 14, 2023: SB 240 introduced to Wisconsin Senate
- April 20, 2023 AB 232 introduced to Wisconsin State Assembly
- May 25, 2023: the Wisconsin State Assembly's Committee on Education held a public hearing on AB 232, a historic first, for a bill that had been brought forward several times before over the past two decades.
- October 10, 2023: the Assembly's Committee on Education unanimously voted to send AB 232 to the full Assembly for a floor vote
- January 23, 2024: the Senate's Committee on Education held a public hearing on SB 240
- February 20, 2024: the State Assembly held a floor vote, and passed AB 232 unanimously by voice vote
- February 27, 2024: the Senate's Committee on Education voted to send SB 240 to the full Senate for a floor vote
- March 12, 2024: the full Senate held a floor vote, and passed AB 232/SB 240 unanimously by voice vote
- April 4, 2024: Governor Evers signs bill in Wausau, with hosted celebrations in Milwaukee and Madison.

Instructions and best practices for testifying at a public hearing:
https://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/media/1760/citizen_testify_final.pdf

Next Steps (as of 03/06/24)

- **Contact State Senators Devin Lemehiu** to request that they urge the Wisconsin Senate's Education Committee to add SB 240 to the Senate Calendar and hold a full vote in the next Senate Session. This is not a full demand as we've seen some members discouraged from doing the right thing for the bill if they are constantly contacted.
 1. **Minority Leader Agard (D) and Assistant Minority Leader Smith (D)**
 2. Your own State Senator
 3. Can send a "thank you" version to those who have co-sponsored
- Emailed letters are preferred, so that they can be time-stamped and tracked
- We suggest that the letters you send have a personally written message tailored to the senator, whenever possible
- In addition, if you know of constituents in the Senate and Assembly districts, particularly those of the Senate Education Committee members, who will write a letter to their legislators, that would be effective. Letters from constituents are more likely to get a response from legislators.

Tips for Personalizing letters:

- Write a personal anecdote/story about why education about Asian Americans is important to Wisconsin.
- Be positive in the tone of your letter.
- If you have extra time and capacity to do some research on your assembly rep or state senator to learn more about their upbringing, local context/constituents and priorities and connect that to why they should support this bill - this extra information will be worth your time.
- Do research on the rep or senator - this may include tapping into their home page, if you subscribe to their e-newsletter, watch any interviews they may have completed or tap into their social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter). Or perhaps you know of some issues that you feel will motivate them to support this bill. When you're researching you only need 2-3 connection points that can draw them into voting for the bill

Find your legislators here: <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

Senate Committee on Education

- Chair: Senator John Jagler (R): Sen.Jagler@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 13 - Watertown
 - Vice-Chair: Senator Romaine Quinn (R): Sen.Quinn@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 25 - Cameron
 - Senator Stephen Nass (R): Sen.Nass@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 11 - Whitewater
 - Senator Duey Stroebel (R): Sen.Stroebel@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 20 - Saukville
 - ** Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara (R): Sen.Cabral-Guevara@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 19 - Appleton
 - ** Senator Chris Larson (D): Sen.Larson@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 7 - Milwaukee
 - Senator LaTonya Johnson (D): Sen.Johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 6 - Milwaukee
- [You can learn more about the Senate Committee on Education members here](#)

Other Key Senators

- Senator Chris Kapenga (R): Sen.Kapenga@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 33 - Delafield
- Senator Devin LeMahieu (R): Sen.LeMahieu@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 9 - Oostburg

- ** Senator Melissa Agard (D): Sen.Agard@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 16 - Madison
- Senator Jeff Smith (D): Sen.Smith@legis.wisconsin.gov; Senate District 31- Brunswick

*** Denotes that the Senator is already a co-sponsor of the bill*

Sample Email Template (updated for use after the 10/10/23 Assembly Education Committee Executive Session) to send to State Senators. [Yellow highlights in brackets can be used for those who are already co-sponsors of the AB 232/SB 240 bill]

Hello,

My name is _____ and [I urge you to co-sponsor] [I thank you for co-sponsoring] Assembly Bill 232/Senate Bill 240, which seeks to amend Act 31 (from 1989) to direct Wisconsin school boards to include K-12 instructional programs regarding Hmong Americans and Asian Americans. This proposed amendment should be passed by Wisconsin's legislature so that all school districts are chartered to implement lesson plans for their K-12 students and teacher training to support a positive learning environment for all students.

I commend the Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Education for holding a public hearing for AB 232 on May 25, 2023, and on October 10, for unanimously voting to send AB 232 to the Assembly floor for a vote. This marks a significant milestone in recognizing the vital role of AAPI contributions to Wisconsin's history, culture, and economy. At the Assembly public hearing, over 50 community members and allies provided testimonies. Their testimonies were inspiring about the need for all our students to learn about one another's culture and history.

As a next step, I request that you urge the Wisconsin Senate's Education Committee to schedule SB 240 for a public hearing. This bipartisan legislation will ensure that the heritage and history of Hmong and Asian Americans are given the attention and inclusion they deserve in our public schools, by making a very simple change to state statute (from 1989), which already includes American Indians, Black Americans, and Hispanics.

With the recent surge of anti-Asian violence, it is even more timely to make sure that our state's public education reflects the communities that make our state whole. Whether Wisconsin's school districts have a large or small number of Asian American students, or whether they are in urban, rural, or suburban areas, AAPI-related education will bring our students greater awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the diverse AAPI communities in Wisconsin. All our students will then be better prepared to be productive citizens in an increasingly changing world, while fostering the development of positive relationships, self-image, and identity for AAPI students across Wisconsin.

Our children deserve to know their story, the story of their peers, and the story of Wisconsin. Please cosponsor this legislation and request that this important bill be scheduled for a public hearing by the Senate's Education Committee. It is essential that you champion this legislative effort to ensure that our diversity is reflected in our K-12 educational system.

I look forward to hearing your response on this very important issue.

Sincerely,
xxxxxxx

Video Instructions

What:

A video, calling people to support Asian American history be taught in schools.

Frame:

Asian American History is American history and uplifting Asian American stories uplifts us all.

Instructions:

Answer at least one of the three prompt questions or convey a hopeful message about why Asian American History matters!

[Here](#) is the link to upload your video by October 31st, 2023.

[Here](#) is the link to the video consent form.

Additional messaging for the video can be found [here](#). (If you have trouble uploading, please send the video by text to Nada Elmikashfi at 6089601036).

Your video should be around 25 seconds, preferably shorter.

Recognize how people are feeling: exhaustion, depletion, anger, hope in community and students. The fight for a better future is with our kids, for our kids, in schools, in education.

Try to center empathy and make an emotional appeal to call for and engage in action.

- **Questions/Prompts**

- Think back to your school days, what would learning more about Asian American history meant to you then? What does it mean to you now?
- What comes to mind when you hear Teach Asian American History?
- How would learning more about Asian American stories impact you and your family?
- What do you love about being Asian American or learning about Asian American history?

Quick tips for creating up-to-scratch videos with a smartphone:

1. Don't shoot vertical video

While vertical shooting may make sense with a device which has a screen in portrait orientation, this does not translate well on any other device. Computer monitors, televisions, even websites, all have landscape-oriented displays - we live in a widescreen world. And it's easier to edit widescreen down to portrait mode than vice-versa.

2. Use a tripod/book/shelf/whatever is available to hold the phone for you

No matter how steady your hands, if you intend to edit multiple takes with my footage later, these slight movements will ruin the professionalism of my video. Using a tripod to stabilize your footage is paramount in creating a professional video.

3. Don't use digital zoom

Sometimes it can be tempting to use the zoom feature on your smartphone to get a closer shot of your subject, but since the lens isn't zooming optically, you're just enlarging the picture digitally. This results in one thing: pixels. If you want to zoom in with a smartphone without it looking pixelated, simply walk closer to your subject.

4. Lighting

Using the flash on a smartphone or digital camera to lighten a subject gives it that old VHS camcorder spotlight appearance. It can't compare to off-camera lighting. My favorite lighting source to use is free and accessible for almost everyone: the sun. Natural lighting looks great in almost every instance. Face your subject toward a window for great natural light, or record outside in a quiet space away from the road. Never have the window behind the subject though or else you'll be left with a silhouette. If you have to record in the dark (I see you, fellow procrastinators) you can buy a "daylight" bulb for \$10 at Target (I know, because I just did this!). Make sure your lamp is set up ~2-3 away so that your face isn't washed out.

5. Exposure and focus

Smartphones and digital cameras will automatically detect and adjust exposure and focus accordingly. It's great for taking quick snaps, but ideally while recording you'll want to have more manual control and lock these down so they don't adjust and leave your footage overexposed and out of focus. Simply tap on your subject using your smartphone's default app to manually lock exposure and focus on your footage. This can be adjusted while filming.

6. Audio recording

Most of the time, recording audio directly from the camera's built-in microphone will suffice, but in professional videos, namely interviews, you will want to have a microphone as close to your subject as possible. Use headphones with a mic!