

April 25, 2023

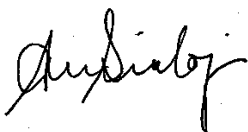
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To the Office of Senator Gray-Jackson:

My name is Amanda Sialofi and I am writing this letter in support of Senate Bill No. 131 (SB0131A) that will provide curriculums and instructions on the history and contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders in the United States. I was born in American Samoa but raised here in Anchorage, and I had the privilege of attending Mt. View Elementary school, Clark Middle school, and graduated from East Anchorage High School (aka Betty Davis East Anchorage High School). As a former K-12 student, I can't recall one class in which history that pertained to me as a Pacific Islander and as an Indigenous person of Polynesia was discussed. In fact, it was not until I started college that I started to dive into the rich history of my culture, ancestors, and the colonization of my people and its territories for a project that I was able to learn more who I am and where I came from. Pacific Islanders make up a decent percentage of the student population within the Anchorage School District and it is vital that these students, similar to our Alaska Native/American Indian relatives, are learning about the history that is relevant to them and the contributions that our people have made to the betterment of the United States. As an educator, I have met too many Pacific Islander students who were struggling with their cultural identity and with racial prejudice, education is vital in embracing diversity, identifying shared values, and combat stigmas and hateful rhetoric. This bill will address a lot of those issues while also providing a sense of belonging for students', which in my opinion requires bipartisan support for this bill to be successful.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice support on this matter. If I could be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me at 907-310-9996.

Fa'afetai tele lava (Thank you so much),



Amanda Sialofi