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New Jersey Requires Asian American and Pacific Islander History to be Taught in Public Schools

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China News, January 21. According to the U.S. *Sing Tao Daily*, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed a bill on January 18, requiring Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history to be taught in public schools starting in the 2022-2023 school year.

The new legislation makes New Jersey the second state in the nation to enact stand-alone legislation requiring students to learn about AAPI history after Illinois enacted similar legislation in 2021.

After the news was released, organizations including Committee of 100 expressed their appreciation, saying it was an important step towards preventing anti-Asian hatred.

“By teaching students about the history and heritage of our AAPI community, we can ensure that the diversity of our state is reflected in our curriculum and create a more tolerant and knowledgeable future for New Jersey. I am proud to sign these bills into law,” said Governor Murphy in a statement.

In addition, another legislation will establish the Commission for Asian American Heritage within the Department of Education. One of the commission's goals is to provide public and non-public schools with guidance on "implementing historical, cultural, and educational programs related to Asians and Asian Americans" and to help design curriculum guidelines.

Committee of 100 President Zheng Yu Huang issued a statement on January 19 regarding the new legislation and congratulates New Jersey, "for centuries, Chinese Americans and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made tremendous contributions to the growth and development of the United States. Now more than ever, it is critical to discuss the contributions – and challenges – that the AAPI community faces. Our hope is that state government and education leaders will follow in the footsteps of Illinois and New Jersey with their own laws and requirements that Chinese American and AAPI history be taught in all public schools across the United States."

In early 2021, Committee of 100 released a commissioned report "From Foundations to Frontiers," which looked at 175 years of Chinese American contributions, information of which has never been taught in public schools. The organization has also been calling for including Asian-American history into American public education. (Xu Ke)