



September 23, 2020

Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

I am writing to urge your support for the inclusion of Korean American Studies in our State's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. As an educator, a Korean American, and a legislator who represents a large Korean American population, I am keenly aware of how the Korean American community has positively impacted California and the rest of the country with its community activities, its contributions, and so much more.

For example, any conversation about the ethnic conflicts that arose during the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest is incomplete without discussing the violence against Korean Americans and how those events contributed to the violence against and marginalization of Asian Americans.

Korean Americans have also helped shape this country through their commitment, actions, and character. Dr. Sammy Lee, for example, won Olympic gold for America in 1948 and 1952 and was the first Asian American man to do so. Additionally, Col. Young Oak Kim was a U.S. Army officer and the first Asian American man to lead a combat battalion during the Korean War. He was also a World War II hero and his humanitarian efforts on behalf of young people, minorities, and victims of domestic violence helped shape the landscape of Los Angeles. These are just two of countless examples of Korean Americans making a positive impact on this country.

Korean American history and identity should be taught as part of the curriculum because this community played a major role in California and the country. Korean Americans founded the Willows Korean Aviation School/Corps in Willows, CA in 1920. The Korean Air Force views the school as its origin.

To understand the Korean American community, its history, and its ethnic identity is to also understand the framework of our country and how this great nation is made up of minorities and their histories.



California has recognized Korean Americans through its recognition of Korean American Day on January 13 of each year. I was lead author of the Assembly Concurrent Resolution that created Korean American Day on January 13, of each year, citing that “with diligence, fortitude, and an enduring belief in the American dream, Korean immigrants have helped to turn emergent areas within the State of California into thriving and respectable communities, while raising their children to be productive Korean Americans.”

I was a co-author of Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 109, Hangul Day, that passed on October 19, 2019 and recognizes Korean Americans as “an integral part of mainstream American society and have made important contributions as Californians in the fields of finance, technology, law, medicine, education, sports, media, the arts, the military, and government, as well as in other areas.” I had the privilege of being the co-author for ACR 109.

I also authored Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 269 that established November 9th of every year as Dosan Ahn Chang Ho day in honor of the Korean Independence leader/His influence and actions helped Koreans understand the importance of a free nation, and as result democracy is rooted in South Korea today.

The Korean American population has a rich history in the State of California and I urge you to include Korean American Studies in California’s Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven S. Choi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" and "C".

Asm. Steven S. Choi, Ph.D.
California State Assembly
District 68