

To: Rep. Joel Kitchens, Committee Chair
Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

From: Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Rev. Kerri Parker, Wisconsin Council of Churches
Mr. Ahmed Quereshi, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee
Ms. Lisa Jones, MICAH
Mr. David Liners, WISDOM
Mrs. Rachel Saladis, Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ
Rabbi Steven Adams, Wisconsin Council of Rabbis

Date: May 25, 2023

RE: Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill #232

As leaders and staff of six major interfaith organizations (Wisconsin Council of Churches, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice, MICAH and WISDOM, the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Wisconsin Council of Rabbis) we write to thank you for consideration of Assembly Bill #232, the Hmong and Asian-American Instruction bill. We believe it is a bill that can go a long way toward building understanding.

All of our faith traditions value education. The Quran says "Whoever follows a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise". The Torah tells us 'do not place a stumbling block before the blind.' A lack of education is a stumbling block to full participation in our society.

Wisconsin has one of the largest populations of Hmong-American people in the country, and the overall population of Asian and Asian-American people is growing rapidly. This bill will not only help students from those communities to know their own history, it will help all students gain a broader appreciation of the many cultures and people that contribute to our state and nation.

Our children are being prepared to live and work in a diverse, multicultural society and workforce. This bill is a step toward helping them to be better prepared for that future. And, of course, for our democracy to thrive it is necessary for us to understand our fellow citizens.

For these and many other reasons, we thank you for holding a hearing on AB 232. We encourage you to support it and to recommend it to your fellow legislators of both parties.