

Kansas Legislature

House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Testimony in Support of HB 2113

By Taben Azad as the President of Wichita Asian Association and Vice President of National Association of Asian American Professionals Wichita Chapter

February 17, 2022

Thank you Chair and Honorable Members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is Taben Azad and I live in Wichita. I currently serve as the President of the Wichita Asian Association as well as the Vice President for the Wichita Chapter of the National Association of Asian American Professionals. I currently work as a Budget Manager for the City of Andover and have been involved in local government for over five years. My testimony speaks on behalf of Asian and Asian American constituents in Sedgwick County, which represents nearly 19,400 people¹. Today, I firmly ask you to vote in support of HB 2113 to establish the advisory commission on Asian-American Pacific Islander affairs.

The mission of both the organizations that I represent today revolve around advocacy, fostering cooperation, and cultural awareness of the Asian American community. As the President of the Wichita Asian Association, I believe establishing this commission is important because of the challenges the AAPI community face. These obstacles include but are not limited to: accessibility to economic resources, a lack of awareness among the Asian community of governmental and social service programs that may be of benefit to them, and to raise visibility and foster more positive dialogue with AAPI individuals who play a significant role in the future of Kansas. Through my involvement in the Wichita Asian Association, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that resources towards the Asian and Asian American community in Wichita can provide. I know that a state-wide commission would create even more valuable change for our community.

In 2020, we saw an increase of more than 4,000 Asian Americans in Sedgwick County according to the U.S. Census. In Kansas overall, there has been an increase of 33.7% Asian Americans, which is a total of 28,265 people. Asian Americans, along with the Hispanic and Latino population, are projected to grow significantly in the next 50 years, in comparison to African American and White populations. It is becoming increasingly clear that Kansas is in need of a commission that addresses the needs of our growing Asian and Asian American population. In the past, Kansas has been diligent in establishing the Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission and the Kansas African American Affairs Commission. It's been more than 20 years since the establishment of a commission based on cultural and race and ethnicity needs. Because of this, I believe it is time for us to establish the AAPI advisory commission.

I ask you all to support HB 2113. Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,
Taben Azad
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¹ <https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Kansas/Wichita/Race-and-Ethnicity>