

Testimony of Raj Goyle to the
House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Proponent for HB 2113 · February 17, 2022

Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply testimony in support of House Bill 2113 which would create an AAPI Affairs Commission. As a former representative of the 87th District in the Kansas House of Representatives and a co-founder of Indian American Impact, the nation's leading civic organization for Indian and South Asian Americans, I'm proud to offer my unequivocal support for this bill and the establishment of an AAPI advisory commission.

As Representative Xu shared in his remarks, Asian Americans are the fastest growing community in the United States, and grew by 36% in Kansas from 2010 to 2020. And yet, for far too long, our voices have been excluded and overlooked from policymaking and in the halls of power. We've experienced an increase in hate crimes and discrimination but our communities have refused to let that bigotry define us. A storied history of heroism, trailblazing, and selfless sacrifice is as much a part of our story.

The establishment of an AAPI-serving commission in Kansas would send a powerful signal to our communities that their voices matter and that our state values representation and inclusion. A New York resident for more than 10 years, I have strong roots in Kansas and had the honor of representing the 87 district for four years. During this time, I observed first-hand the power of representation in inviting broader participation. There were many times when Asian Americans in Kansas would stop me and say they didn't realize public service was an option for them until they saw someone like me win a seat and serve successfully.

In playing a vital role in coordinating the efforts of state departments to serve the needs of AAPI residents, the AAPI commission goes a long way in ensuring that resources and programs are accessible to all residents who make communities home. Where there are gaps in services or accessibility, the commission will be tasked with proposing new programs to protect AAPI constituents. And they'll rely on disaggregated data and comprehensive analyses to understand how different communities are disproportionately impacted by policies and programs.

To be clear, the creation of an AAPI advisory commission is not something that will solely benefit Asian Americans. When we galvanize around efforts to ensure the

needs of any community are being met, *everyone* benefits, and we have the evidence to prove it. The successes of AAPI commissions in other states and at the federal level have resulted in improved hate crimes reporting that has increased safety levels not just for Asian Americans but for all communities.

In Kansas, the African American Affairs Commission and Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission have been extremely successful in securing community grants that have benefited and lowered costs for all Kansas residents.

Thank you again for accepting this testimony and your time and consideration. I strongly encourage each member to vote in favor of establishing the AAPI Advisory Commission.