

GROWING UP ASIAN IN AMERICA

DEAR SENATOR HARRIS:

I am an Asian American.
I don't know my real name.

Let me tell you my story.

In a Virginia dust-filled attic in my Great Grandmother's house, I often wondered when I went up there one time. I saw flowers, a picture of my Great Grandfather, and a bundle of incense sticks. She would always go up there to pray to him on his birthday or any special occasion. My mother never even met him. He was killed by the Khmer Rouge before my mom was even born. My Great Grandmother fought the Khmer Rouge. She had to escape, bringing my whole family to the United States. My Great Grandmother never told my mom anything about my Great Grandfather. She never spoke about him.

He died because he knew how to read. The Khmer Rouge said it wasn't allowed. He started reading so they had to kill him. That was when my family became immigrants, traveling from Cambodia and then to United States Of America. I never really understand at first why my mom was very serious about me, my grades, and school. I had a very hard time understanding school because they never gave me close attention. She would be sad, reminding me that "We came to the United States for our whole family and you to have an education and better life. In Cambodia, my grandfather, and other families were killed for learning".

My teacher would always say "I hear I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand.". My mother has always insisted that "You Have To Believe In Yourself". I also found out that my other grandmother escaped from Laos. Coming to America, she had to

change our family name, made up a new one and tried to make a new start here. She raised her four kids, and found the opportunities in a different land. She did not at first speak a word of English.

America is called the "THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE. Please give immigrants a chance to be free. When I heard about a wall to keep out immigrants, I became very concerned. My family had to escape being killed. If a child is born in the U.S and the parents are immigrants, please don't let the family get separated. The children may then fail to reach their goals.

I understand that you are an Asian American, and I was inspired by your own experience. One was life changing, and then you said, "It is not a measure of your capacity." You are an achiever, and you can help others like you. I believe failure is not the falling down, it is the staying down. I believe in you.