



## CALIFORNIA ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

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### California Asian & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus Announce Policy Priorities

**Sacramento, CA** – The Asian & Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus announced its policy priorities at a press conference held at the Chinese for Affirmative Action offices in the heart of San Francisco's Chinatown. API Legislative Caucus Members were joined with the American Association of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture, Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus, Chinese for Affirmative Action, and the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs.

"The API Legislative Caucus is committed to fulfilling its mission of advocacy on behalf of the Asian & Pacific Islander American (APIA) community," stated Assemblymember Das Williams, Chair of the API Legislative Caucus. "Our Caucus has actively engaged Governor Jerry Brown and the leadership of the California State Legislature on policies that would greatly address the many needs of the Asian & Pacific Islander American (APIA) community."

The API Legislative Caucus highlighted five policy issues they will be focusing on for the 2015 Legislative Session:

- **Higher Education Funding** – Supporting increased funding to both the University of California and California State University to offset increases to student fees, increase student enrollment, and protect the quality of academic education in the CSU and UC systems.
- **One California Proposal** - The API Legislative Caucus, together with the Latino Legislative Caucus, is advocating for \$20 million to provide assistance to on-the-ground organizations with a proven track record with Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) cases. This new program would be housed under the Department of Social Services to allow qualified nonprofits to provide education, outreach and application assistance for lawful permanent residents and undocumented immigrants eligible for naturalization or administrative relief.
- **Acupuncture** - The API Legislative Caucus is advocating for the restoration of certain optional Medi-Cal benefits that were eliminated in 2009, specifically acupuncture. In many cases, APIA community members receive care for health issues using alternative methods. Restoring acupuncture as an optional benefit will ensure that our APIA community members can access some form of care when faced with medical needs.
- **Disaggregated Data** – Assemblymember Rob Bonta is carrying AB 176 relative to disaggregated data to enable the state and public to identify trends that are typically unseen through aggregate data, and ensure that the state is adequately meeting the health and education needs of its residents.
- **Language access** - According to Asian Americans Advancing Justice, 1.7 million Asian Americans statewide are limited English proficient (LEP), an 11% increase since 2000. Over 23% of Asian American households in California are linguistically isolated. Language barriers could prevent APIA community members from accessing state services, from finding employment, and even from voting. Consequently, the API Legislative Caucus Members have introduced a number of bills related to language access. Additionally, the Caucus supports increased transparency and information about school funding provided through Local Control Funding Formula as the program is being implemented, especially for English Language Learner students.

**The following are statements about the API Caucus legislative priorities by members of the API Caucus:**

**Sen. Carol Liu (D - La Cañada Flintridge):**

“As a long-time advocate for quality education of all Californians, I am committed to ensuring our API students in the K-12 and higher education system in California have equal opportunities to access effective educational services and supports. Requiring greater accountability and transparency in ensuring school districts direct LCFF funding to their English Learner and low-income students and ensuring all higher education segments make affordability, timely completion, and student success their highest priorities are critical to API students across California realizing their full potential.”

**Sen. Richard Pan (D – Sacramento):**

“Even though California immigrants contribute \$130 billion annually to our gross domestic product, they continue to be targets for discrimination, hate crimes, and unequal access,” said Dr. Richard Pan, a State Senator representing Sacramento and author of Senate Bill 600. “SB 600 would protect hard-working immigrants by prohibiting businesses in the state from discriminating based on their immigration status, citizenship and language.”

**Asm. Rob Bonta (D – Oakland):**

“I am pleased the API Legislative Caucus policy priorities reflect a commitment to ensuring access to quality education and health care and civil services by recognizing the distinct needs of the diverse communities within the Asian American population. Data disaggregation, specifically, is imperative for uncovering and addressing social, economic, and educational disparities, and I am proud to have the caucus’s strong support for my bill, AB 176. Additionally, I am grateful to the caucus for joining my efforts to increase Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for providers and restoring the optional benefit for acupuncture.”

**Asm. Ed Chau (D – Monterey Park):**

“For many APIA Californians who are not proficient in English, the lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate policies remains a major barrier to accessing adequate healthcare and for improving the needs of voters,” said Assemblymember Ed Chau (D-Monterey Park). “By ensuring that the State adopts policies to improve language access, we are breaking down barriers that can contribute to disparities in healthcare and voter treatment.”

**Asm. David Chiu (D – San Francisco):**

“The One California budget proposal is important because the transformational impact on individuals and families of each new work permit and each new citizen is life-changing and adds great benefits to our communities and economy. Additionally, acupuncture has been a pillar of health in our community, and since Governor Jerry Brown legalized acupuncture in California in 1976, it has become an essential treatment option for thousands of Californians on Medi-Cal. I look forward to continue our efforts to provide immigration and health services to all Californians.”

**Asm. Kansen Chu (D – San Jose):**

“I stand in full support of the Legislative Priorities set forth by the Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus. It is important for California to remain steadfast in its goal to empower Asian and Pacific Islanders and continue to recognize the myriad of distinct social realities they face each day. As one of the fastest growing populations in the nation, we must do everything in our power to ensure that they continue to thrive, achieve and succeed.”

**Asm. Phil Ting (D – San Francisco):**

“Language skills should never be an impediment to community engagement or to accessing critical services,” said Assemblymember Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), Vice Chair of the API Caucus. “Imagine being sick and unable to communicate with your doctor about how to take your medications. This problem affects over 6 million Californians and nearly half of San Franciscans. By ensuring that patients understand how to take their medications, my AB 1073 will save lives.”

*The API Legislative Caucus was established in 2001 with the mission of representing and advocating for the interests of the diverse Asian and Pacific Islander communities throughout California. Additionally, the Caucus seeks to increase Asian Pacific Islander participation and representation in all levels of government.*

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