



2008 ANNUAL REPORT

*A Report to the
Governor and Legislature*



COMMISSION ON
ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN AFFAIRS



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MISSION

The mission of the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs is to elevate the political, economic and social issues of Asians and Pacific Islanders by contributing to and strengthening how state government addresses the needs, issues and concerns of the diverse and complex Asian and Pacific Islander American communities.

CHARGE

The charge of the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs is to:

- Advise the Governor and Legislature on how to respond most effectively to views, needs and concerns of the state's Asian and Pacific Islander American communities.
- Assist the state in being an effective liaison and conducting outreach with Asian and Pacific Islander American communities through information dissemination about Asian and Pacific Islander American communities concerning public and private programs beneficial to their interests.
- Examine issues of access and cultural language sensitivity by state agencies, departments and commissions.
- Provide assistance to policymakers and state agencies in identifying Asian and Pacific Islander American communities' needs and issues and develop appropriate responses and programs.
- Educate the public about hate crimes against Asian and Pacific Islander American communities.

For more information about the Commission, please call (916) 319-3686.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER, MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE GREAT STATE OF CALIFORNIA:

As an inaugural member of this commission, now in its fifth year, I continue to be amazed at the depth of involvement among individuals involved with the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs each year. We sincerely thank and send our best wishes to our outgoing commissioners: Akemi Arakaki (who served as chair in 2007), Fritz Friedman, Francisco Hsieh, David Kim and Phil Ting.

We welcome six new commissioners who are dynamic and committed leaders in their respective communities: Kim-Yen Huynh, Catherine 'Ofa Mann, Mimi Song, Andrew Wong, Blong Xiong and Dianne Yamashiro-Omi.

Together with the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality, Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network and the California Asian Pacific Islander Caucus Institute, we organized another successful policy summit in our state capitol with more than 200 leaders from around the state.

In addition, because the foreclosure crisis hit our communities and our state, we partnered with the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, Asian and Pacific Islanders California Network, National Coalition for Asian Pacific Community Development and the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council in a special joint hearing designed to delineate our specific issues and recommendations to the legislature, lending community and other state leaders.

I, along with my fellow commissioners, would like to thank our state leaders, state departments and community organizations from around the state for their commitment and partnership in working with the Commission to improve the quality of life for the people in our communities and all Californians.

It is an honor to serve as the chair this year. I look forward to partnering with you as we rise to new challenges and strengthen our united front.

Diane Ujiiye
Chair

Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND COMMISSION UPDATE

This year marked five years of work for the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs. During that time, the Commission has addressed a multitude of issues to forward to the governor and the legislature affecting the statewide Asian and Pacific Islander American community ranging from the problem gambling epidemic to the Hmong refugee resettlement in Central California to access to health care, education, employment and economic development.



Commissioners Blong Xiong, Diane Ujiye, Nitasha Sawhney, Assemblymember Warren Furutani, Board of Equalization Member Judy Chu and API Legislative Caucus Chair Ted Lieu listen to presentations at the Foreclosure Crisis Hearing.

discussions continued to arise—the foreclosure crisis. As a result, the Commission and community leaders decided to hold a public hearing on the issue for later in the year.

In June, the Commission joined with the California Asian Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus and held a hearing, co-sponsored by the Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, on the impact of the foreclosure crisis. More than 100 people attended representing state and local government, the lending industry, community-based organizations, affected individuals and other stakeholders.

COMMISSION UPDATE

2008 California Asian Pacific Islander Policy Summit

In April, the Commission again partnered with the California Asian Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus, Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality, Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network and the California Asian Pacific Islander Caucus Institute to organize the annual policy summit in Sacramento. More than 200 health, human services, education, housing, economic and community development leaders, providers and advocates participated.

Once again, as a result of a “call for workshops,” a diverse spectrum of skills building and educational sessions addressed numerous issues of importance to our communities. Workshop topics included youth issues; disaggregated data; immigration and the family; obesity; media as an outreach tool; college campus organizing; access and opportunity; older adults with disabilities; environmental justice and civic engagement.

This year’s roundtable discussions identified issues and advocacy recommendations in the areas of health, mental health, housing/community development, voting rights and participation, education/higher education, environmental justice, juvenile justice, youth/young adults, social services, substance abuse/problem gambling, issues impacting immigrants and issues impacting older adults. Participants were also engaged in various legislative and budget training sessions designed to prepare them for visits to the capitol. Legislation and budget advocacy focused on four major areas: language access, civil rights, health and social services. Throughout the summit, informal discussions took place around the housing foreclosure crisis. Commissioners and community leaders decided that the issue needed to be further elevated and decided to convene a statewide hearing for later in the year.



Catherine 'Ofa Mann at API voting event.



Policy summit participants.



Wes Tanaka, June Pouesi, Marissa Castro-Salvati and Daphne Ng at the API Policy Summit.

The work of the Commission, this year, fell into two major areas: the annual policy summit and the foreclosure crisis our nation, state and community is facing currently.

In April, the Commission joined with the California Asian Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus, Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality, Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network and the California Asian Pacific Islander Caucus Institute to organize the annual two-day California Asian Pacific Islander Policy Summit in Sacramento.

The summit brought more than 200 community leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors together to address a myriad of issues in plenary sessions, workshops and roundtable discussions ranging from health care to education to immigration to environmental justice to housing among many other issues. A major theme, however, from the plenaries, workshops and roundtable



Diane Ujiye speaks to API Policy Summit participants.

COMMISSION UPDATE

Foreclosure Hearing

While much attention has been given to the foreclosure crisis in general, there remains particular concern among Asian and Pacific Islander American leaders over a number of issues:

- Limited English-speaking immigrants and refugees targeted by predatory lenders;
- API immigrants and refugees who recently purchased homes via subprime loans;
- Asian immigrant entrepreneurs who have taken equity from their homes to support their small businesses;
- Low-income renters who are displaced because their apartments are being foreclosed upon; and
- Entire neighborhoods that are experiencing greater blight due to the growing number of vacant foreclosed properties.

In June, the Commission joined the Asian and Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus to convene a hearing on the impact of the foreclosure crisis on our communities. The hearing was co-sponsored by the Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development.

Assemblymember Ted Lieu, chair of the API Legislative Caucus, chaired the hearing followed by remarks from State Controller John Chiang, Board of Equalization Member Judy Chu and Assemblymember Warren Furutani.



Fresno community leaders participate in the API Policy Summit at the State Capitol.



Assemblymember Warren Furutani with community leaders at the API Policy Summit.

Public testimony on the impact on API families were presented by Bill Watanabe, National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development; a family member from the Korean Resource Center; Dennis Arguelles, Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council; Cooke Sunoo, Asian Pacific Islander Small Business Program; Margaret Iwanaga-Penrose, Union of Pan Asian Communities; Namoch Sokhom, Pacific Asian Consortium on Employment; Hye-pin Im, Korean Churches for Community Development; Joel Jacinto, Search to Involve Pilipino Americans and Peter Vang, Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network.

Responses to the presentations were made by the Housing and Urban Development Department, the California Housing Finance Agency and the California Mortgage Bankers Association. More than 100 people attended representing local and state government, community-based organizations, the lending community and other stakeholders. The

recommendations from the testimony were many but several fell in to specific themes:

- Preventing foreclosures and saving homes;
- Stabilizing neighborhoods, protecting the rights of low-income tenants and mitigating the impact on small businesses and
- Developing long-term, sustainable solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

The hearing was critical in bringing to light issues, problems and challenges within API communities, about which the federal, state, local and lending community were not fully aware. As a result of the hearing, some Asian Pacific Islander community-based organizations received direct financial support from the banking and lending industry to expand foreclosure assistance services. Next steps for the Commission on this issue include monitoring the progress of the federal and state responses and continued advocacy to assist families.

Asian Pacific Problem Gambling Task Force

The Commission founded the Asian Pacific Islander Problem Gambling Task Force in 2004. While the task force separated from the Commission after one year's work, the Commission remains supportive of the work of the task force.



Nitasha Sawhney, Andrew Wong, Kim-Yen Huynh, Catherine 'Ofa Mann, Diane Ujiye, Mimi Song, Francisco Hsieh and Norman Hui at commission meeting in Sacramento.

This year, the task force focused its attention on the revised Indian gaming compacts and the Special Distribution Fund which allocates funds to the Alcohol Drug Program – Office of Problem Gambling. The task force continued its advocacy in recommending a change in the allocation formula so that the approximately \$3 million budget could be increased to meet the growing prevention and treatment needs in California. Unfortunately, the mandate and formula remains status quo while the impact of problem and pathological gambling continues to devastate many of our API families.

COMMISSIONERS' BIOGRAPHIES



DIANE UJIYE

CHAIR

Diane Ujiye is the director of the Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network, a statewide network of health, human service, education, housing/community economic development and immigrant rights organizations.



PAUL OSAKI

Paul Osaki is the executive director of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.



NITASHA SAWHNEY

VICE CHAIR

Nitasha Sawhney is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Garcia Calderon Ruiz, LLP, where she specializes in education, labor and employment law matters.



MIMI SONG

Mimi Song is CEO of Mimi Song Realty Group, Inc., a commercial real estate brokerage based in Southern California.



CATHERINE 'OFA MANN

TREASURER

Catherine 'Ofa Mann is a leader in many organizations including APAPA, the Council of Asian Pacific Islanders Together for Advocacy & Leadership and To'utupu 'oe 'Otu Felenite Association of Sacramento.



ALEXIS WONG

Alexis Wong is founder and president of AGI Capital, a real estate investment and development company in San Francisco.



DIANNE YAMASHIRO-OMI

SECRETARY

Dianne Yamashiro-Omi is a senior program officer with the California Endowment, a statewide private foundation dedicated to increasing access to health care for underserved populations.



ANDREW WONG

The Honorable Andrew Wong, a member of the Pomona Unified School District Board of Education, is of counsel with Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP.



NORMAN H. HUI, D.D.S.

Norman H. Hui, a founding member of the Commission and its first chair, practices dentistry in the San Francisco Bay Area.



CHARLIE WOO

Charlie Woo is the co-founder and CEO of Megatoys, a toy manufacturing, import/export and wholesale company based in downtown Los Angeles.



KIM-YEN HUYNH

Kim-Yen Huynh is senior vice president and marketing officer of First Vietnamese American Bank.



BLONG XIONG

The Honorable Blong Xiong is the first Asian American and first Hmong councilmember serving on the Fresno City Council.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR

For 2009, the Commission determined that it would identify general priorities which would provide a guideline of goals and targets for specific legislative bills, recommendations and items.

These priorities go hand in hand with the mission of the Commission to elevate the political, economic and social issues of Asians and Pacific Islanders by contributing to and strengthening how state government addresses the needs, issues and concerns of the diverse and complex Asian and Pacific Islander American communities.

The Commission priorities for 2009 include:

Civic engagement and participation and the protection of civil rights

Through the work of the Commission, it has become apparent that civic engagement and participation among the Asian and Pacific Islander community remains an issue. This is true both in the voting and electoral process, as well as representation at all levels of government. It is important to ensure that the community has the ability to participate in California's democratic process.

Asian Pacific Islander diversity

The Commission wants to ensure that the diversity of all Asian and Pacific Islander American communities is recognized. There are more than 20 API ethnic groups in the state, and as the fastest growing and most diverse ethnic group in California, the Commission will continue to strive for recognition and advancement of all such communities.

Culturally competent and linguistically appropriate access

The Commission will continue to work on issues of access for the Asian and Pacific Islander American communities. We view this as a critical issue that spans many arenas including but not limited to equal access, education, health, human services, community development, justice and mental health services and programs in California.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The successful fifth year of the Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs was made possible through the continued support of numerous friends, leaders and community-based organizations.

Each year since our inception, the Commission has been privileged to receive consistent support from the California Asian Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus, co-chaired by Assemblymembers Ted Lieu and Alan Nakanishi. We extend sincere gratitude to the Caucus co-chairs and members: Assemblymembers Mike Eng, Mary Hayashi, Shirley Horton, Fiona Ma, Alberto Torrico, Van Tran, Warren Furutani; Senator Leland Yee; State Controller John Chiang; and Board of Equalization members Judy Chu, Michelle Park Steel and Betty Yee.

We also owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to Pam Chueh, the API Legislative Caucus consultant who worked on the Commission's behalf from its inception until she moved on to new opportunities. We extend our sincerest thanks to Pam and wish her all the best in her future endeavors. We also thank and welcome Andrew Medina who has joined the API Legislative Caucus as a consultant and has already begun to support the Commission. We also acknowledge and thank our longstanding partners in fulfilling our mission, the API Legislative Caucus Institute, chaired by Carole Hayashino.

Special thanks go to Bill Wong who has provided extensive assistance to the Commission, especially with the housing foreclosure crisis hearing. His expertise, time and dedication are indeed recognized and appreciated.

Much appreciation goes to five outgoing commissioners who were with us from the beginning: Akemi Arakaki, Fritz Friedman, Francisco Hsieh, David Kim and Phil Ting.

The Commission is proud of the continued partnership with the Asian Pacific Islander Problem Gambling Task Force. We remain committed to supporting the much needed work of that task force.

The Commission would not be in existence today without former Assemblymember George Nakano who authored Assembly Bill 116, the legislation that created our commission in 2002.

We thank Murakawa Communications for producing this annual report with a keen eye and creative hand.



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