



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California AAPI Legislative Caucus Opposes SB 1363 and Demands Actions over Promises for the AAPI Community

SACRAMENTO — The California Asian American and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (AAPILC) is disappointed that the sponsors of SB 1363 have repeatedly refused to partner with the caucus on real efforts to teach Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander history in California schools, instead promoting a performative bill over substantive action, and thus must oppose SB 1363.

The Asian Pacific Islander Public Affairs Association (APAPA) chose not to inform or work with the AAPILC or the education community before introducing the bill and chose to introduce a performative bill that only “encourages” teaching the contributions of California Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as part of social sciences in California schools. While the sponsors of SB 1363 point to laws in other states, including Illinois, New Jersey, and Connecticut; those states require AAPI studies in public school curricula. SB 1363 does not require any school in California to teach AAPI studies and does not provide any funding for curricula or educators to teach this critical history, despite the testimony from bill supporters in hearings.

On several occasions, the AAPILC has reached out to the bill sponsors to withdraw this performative bill and to partner with the caucus and AAPI community leaders on a substantive bill, but despite false assurances that APAPA would work with the caucus, APAPA has continued to push forward this unacceptable bill. Our community deserves real action to make visible our history as Asian American and Pacific Islanders.

“The AAPI community deserves to have our history taught to California students, and to that end, the caucus supported a law requiring ethnic studies for high school graduation, asked the Superintendent of Public Instruction and superintendents to ensure high schools teach AAPI ethnic studies to meet that graduation requirement, and has been advocating for funding to develop curriculum materials for educators to teach AAPI studies,” said **Dr. Richard Pan (D-Sacramento), Chair of the AAPI Legislative Caucus**. “I want to thank Assemblymember Patrick O’Donnell for being a champion for the AAPI community and for his leadership in demanding quality education. The AAPI community deserves more than symbolism.”

The AAPILC has succeeded in achieving substantive improvements for the AAPI community. In public education, the AAPILC championed AB 101 (Medina) establishing California as the first state to mandate ethnic studies for high school graduation. The AAPILC reached out to school districts and worked with educators to ensure AAPI stories were included in AB 101. The Caucus has also supported SB 895 (Nguyen) to require social studies lessons about Vietnamese refugees, the Cambodian genocide and Hmong history.

As hate incidents against AAPI grew during the COVID pandemic due to hateful rhetoric from President Trump and his supporters, the AAPILC partnered with AAPI civil rights organizations and community groups to pass a record \$165.5 million API Equity Budget, the largest such fund for the AAPI community passed by any state last year or since. This budget included funding for AAPI community organizations to support survivors of hate incidents, school programs to prevent bullying of AAPI youth, ethnic media to engage our community in-language and research to understand the needs of diverse AAPI communities.

We are also proud to have championed increased representation of AAPI in government including the appointment of Rob Bonta as California's Attorney General, the first Filipino and only second AAPI to serve in this position.

“Given the unprecedented amount of anti-Asian hate crimes, it is imperative ethnic studies is required in all curriculum to proactively fight systemic racism.” **said Assemblymember Evan Low (D – Silicon Valley), Vice-Chair of the California AAPI Legislative Caucus**

The AAPI community remains underrepresented in leadership and power in the United States and California. Although almost one in six Californians are AAPI, we do not see that represented in the rooms where decisions are made. AAPI stories are our stories, and we must be empowered to decide how our stories are told.

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The California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus represents and advocates for the interests of the diverse AAPI communities throughout California. It seeks to increase Asian American & Pacific Islander participation and representation in all levels of government.

Website of the California AAPI Legislative Caucus: <https://aapilegcaucus.legislature.ca.gov/>