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## **California Makes History with Three Newly Elected AAPI Females into State Government**

**SACRAMENTO** – Today the California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (AAPILC) celebrates three new AAPI, female, first-time democratic candidates as members: Aisha Wahab (SD10), Stephanie Nguyen (AD 10), and Jasmeet Bains (AD 35).

“A heartfelt welcome to our newest members of the AAPI Legislative Caucus: Senator Aisha Wahab, Assemblymember Jasmeet Bains, and Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen. The united efforts in the community elected three female AAPI members to the Caucus enabling us to better represent and support the desires and needs of our diverse AAPI communities.” said Assemblymember Evan Low, Chair of the AAPI Legislative Caucus.

A total of thirty-eight Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) have served in the California Legislature, of which only nine have been AAPI females. March Fong Eu became the first API woman and Chinese American elected to the Legislature in 1966. Today, the total number of API females in the state legislature increases by 25% to 12. Not only is this the first time in nearly ten years the AAPI Legislative Caucus has seen API female elected officials, but also it is the very first time an Afghan-American woman is elected to the California State Senate; an Indian-origin Sikh woman has been elected to the California State Assembly; and a Vietnamese female Democrat is elected to the California State Assembly.

The AAPI Legislative Caucus also works alongside four Republican joint caucus members, Senator Janet Nguyen, Assemblymember Phillip Chen, Assemblymember Vince Fong and Assemblymember Tri Ta, as well as, State Constitutional Officers, Attorney General Rob Bonta and Treasurer Fiona Ma, making one of the largest representations of APIs in California’s state government since the inception of AAPILC over 20 years ago. Together, their collaborative efforts have been instrumental to the achievements and success for our Californian AAPI communities, such as: the API Equity Budget and AB2596 (Low) Lunar New Year.



This year's election has successfully gained both female and API representation in our state legislature, particularly influenced by our AAPI voters. California has the highest number of Asian American eligible voters in the United States, with 4,177,936 people (Pew Research Center). AAPIVote shared "AAPI voters had the highest growth of any racial group in 2020, with a 47% increase. This milestone happened despite a rise of anti-Asian hate and violence, and a global pandemic that shut down the US economy. However, it did not happen overnight. This was a result of decades of population growth, coordinated organizing, and strategic investments to encourage AAPIs to register and vote at the same levels as other communities" (AAPIVote). Californian AAPI voters have shown to shape and influence election results through increased voter eligibility, representation, community organizing, and civic engagement. Today, the election of Wahab, Bains, and Nguyen is a historical victory for our AAPI communities.

"I am excited to welcome not one, but three AAPI Democratic women to the California State Legislature and the AAPI Legislative Caucus! Assemblymembers Jasmeet Bains and Stephanie Nguyen and Senator Aisha Wahab are accomplished leaders who will bring fresh perspectives. I look forward to working with them to address the needs and priorities of the AAPI community," said Assemblymember Mike Fong, Assembly Vice Chair of the AAPI Legislative Caucus.

"California is home to the largest and most diverse AAPI population in the nation, and as our communities continue to grow, so too should our representation at the highest levels of state government. I'd like to offer a warm welcome to our newest AAPI Caucus Members who will not only strengthen the voice of AAPIs but also our collective movement toward a more inclusive and equitable future for all Californians." said Senator Dave Min, Senate Vice Chair of the AAPI Legislative Caucus.

*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 AAPI participation and representation in all levels of government.*

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

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