



# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

CALIFORNIA

# APILC

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

# A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, I am pleased to present the **2020 Year In Review**, an annual report to share all the important work we did together during this challenging year.



In 2020, we continued our efforts to **defend immigrant and refugee communities**, engaged with hundreds of people to **discuss the rise in xenophobia, spoke out against anti-Asian hate incidents and hate crimes, advocated for resources for underserved communities** and so much more as we confronted the realities of a **worldwide pandemic**.

This year also marks the **end of my tenure as Chair of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus**. Over the past two years, I have enjoyed partnering with you to make this state more inclusive, equitable and just for our communities. I was proud to serve with **Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi** as our Vice Chair in the Assembly, **Senator Richard Pan** as our Vice Chair in the Senate and **Assemblymember Ash Kalra** as our parliamentarian. **Our new Caucus leadership will be announced on December 7th.**

I also want to thank the amazing work of the **Chief Consultant to the API Caucus, Cat Nou**. Cat has been single-handedly responsible for all of our Caucus' programs, advocacy and outreach, and our Caucus has been able to work on so many fronts because of her incredible leadership.

**Finally, thank you to all of you for your inspiring work on behalf of our communities.** Our Caucus looks forward to continuing our work together!

Sincerely,

DAVID CHIU

Chair, CA Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (2018-2020)  
Assemblymember, 17th Assembly District

# CHAMPIONING POLICY SOLUTIONS

California is the most diverse state in the nation and is a state of immigrants. For Asian Americans and Pacific Islander communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread health concerns as well as an increase in discrimination and racist attacks.

To respond to the urgent needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities during this crisis, the API Legislative Caucus established focused bill and budget priorities. Despite the unprecedented pressures on the state budget and the revised legislative schedule, several of these key measures were approved and signed by the Governor.

## BUDGET

**Undocumented adults and seniors will have access to healthcare.** The 2020 budget extended Medi-Cal eligibility to undocumented seniors who meet the income threshold beginning January 1, 2022.

**More California workers are eligible to receive tax credits.** The California Earned Income Tax Credit was expanded to allow all income eligible tax paying workers, regardless of status, to file for this tax credit. The final budget allowed tax filers with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) with at least one child six years of age or younger to access the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Young Child Tax Credit. The requirement for an ITIN tax filer to have at least one child under the age of six to qualify for the CalEITC was later removed through legislation.

**API communities have increased capacity and representation in California.** In 2019, the California Commission on APIA Affairs was funded for the first time since it was established in 2002. The \$500,000 continuous appropriation supports staff and commissioners as they execute its mission of advising the Governor and Legislature on the views, needs and concerns for California's API communities. In November 2020, Nkauj Iab Yang was announced as the Commission's inaugural Executive Director.

# CHAMPIONING POLICY SOLUTIONS

## LEGISLATION

**Increased corporate board diversity.** Assembly Bill 979 (Holden and Chiu) requires that each publicly held corporation headquartered in California to have at least one director from an underrepresented community by the close of 2021.

**Expanded Ethnic Studies for California students.** Assembly Bill 1460 (Weber and Chiu) requires an Ethnic Studies course requirement in the California State University (CSU) system to ensure their graduates are exposed to the cultural competencies and social justice history of the United States necessary for navigating a multi-cultural, rapidly evolving nation.

**Provided economic opportunities for refugees and asylees.** Assembly Bill 2113 (Low) supports refugees and asylees by requiring that their application for a professional license be expedited by boards under the Department of Consumer Affairs. This will ensure that refugees are able to find skilled employment more quickly and establish a strong financial foundation.

**Protected utility data of undocumented immigrants from immigration authorities.** Assembly Bill 2788 (Gloria) prevents electric and gas utilities from sharing or disclosing a customer's electrical or gas consumption data with any immigration authority without a court-ordered subpoena or judicial warrant.. Requiring additional protective measures as prescribed in AB 2788 will provide peace of mind that is especially needed in these current uncertain times.

**Ensured a reliable supply of personal protective equipment.** Senate Bill 275 (Pan) creates a reliable supply of PPE to ensure healthcare workers, essential workers, and the public at large are protected during the next health emergency.

**Allowed voters to decide on affirmative action in California.** Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 5 (Weber) added a measure to the ballot which let California voters decide whether to restore affirmative action in California.

# DEFENDING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

**The COVID-19 pandemic revealed racism and discrimination targeting APIs and harmful disparities within our systems. As we continued our efforts to defend immigrant and refugee communities, our Caucus partnered with stakeholders and organizations to lead several efforts to raise awareness and visibility to address our unique needs.**

**Denounced Trump xenophobia and stood up against anti-Asian hate.** As the pandemic reached the US the Trump Administration wrongly associated the coronavirus with being Chinese. This harmful rhetoric resulted in a rise in xenophobia and hate incidents against Asian Americans. Our Caucus worked with Chinese for Affirmative Action, San Francisco State University's Asian American Studies Department and Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council to announce the new Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center website to begin tracking incidents.

**Defended our immigrant and refugee communities under threat of deportation.** Our Caucus provided ongoing support for immigrants and Southeast Asian refugees who have served their time and are under threat of deportation to countries their families fled. During this pandemic, we have also advocated to stop transfers to Immigration and Customs Enforcement which puts these individuals at increased risk for COVID-19.

**Fought against the "public charge" federal rule change through legislation, an amicus brief and congressional advocacy.** Building on the work from the previous year, we engaged in efforts with partners like the One Nation Commission to stop changes to federal regulations on "public charge" that would consider an immigrant's use of programs related to health and well-being in deciding whether to deny their entry into the United States or lawful permanent residence.

# DEFENDING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

**Worked with small business stakeholders to re-open nail salons during pandemic.** California has the largest nail salon workforce in the country, predominantly comprised of Vietnamese immigrant female workers. Our Caucus worked with the Governor's Administration and stakeholders such as the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, Asian Health Services and Garden Grove City Councilmember Diedre Nguyen to safely re-open nail salons as other personal care industries were re-opening.

**Successfully advocated for increased translations of COVID-19 materials and information specific to immigrant and refugee communities.** Our Caucus worked with the Governor's Administration to produce the "Guide for Immigrant Californians" which contains important resources and information relevant to immigrant and refugee communities. The guide was translated into four Asian languages.

**Urged the California Department of Public Health to collect additional race and ethnicity data.** COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in California. Issues with the data has prevented experts from learning and doing more about the health and social impact of COVID-19 in these communities. Our Caucus worked with the Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander COVID-19 Policy and Research Team, National Pacific Islander COVID-19 Response Team and the NHPI COVID-19 Resource Team to advocate for additional race and ethnicity data.

**Our Caucus extends our deepest condolences to all Californians who have lost loved ones as a result of COVID-19. Additionally, we thank all of our essential workers including farm workers, grocery store employees, doctors, nurses, home health aides, and more who have courageously served the needs of Californians during this worldwide public health crisis.**

# ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

## Rise: Asian Pacific America

"Rise: Asian Pacific America", or **RiseAPA**, was a series of virtual town halls co-hosted by the API Legislative Caucus to respond to the anti-Asian hate we were seeing throughout our diverse communities. Throughout Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, **nearly 1,800 people registered** to join elected officials, community leaders and others to **discuss where we are today, where we've been as a community, and where we need to go, to rise up to the challenges we face in the near and remote future**. For four consecutive weeks, notable guest speakers helped frame the conversation and voices from around the country were invited to take part in the discussion.



*Architects of RiseAPA represented grassroots state and local APA elected and community leaders from across the nation including: **David Chiu**, California State Assembly, **Mary Lou Akai-Ferguson**, formerly, Director, AAPIs with Warren, **Fue Lee**, Minnesota House of Representatives, **Yuh-Line Niou**, New York State Assembly, **Cat Nou**, California API Legislative Caucus, **Sharon Tomiko Santos**, Washington House of Representatives, **Michelle Wu**, Boston City Council and **Jeff Yang**, Author and Journalist*

# ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

## Asian Pacific Islander Policy Summit: 2020 Vision for the Next Decade

Our Caucus convened our biennial **API Policy Summit, a two day virtual conference** which brought together hundreds of APIs across California. The theme **"2020 Vision for the Next Decade"** invited statewide API leaders representing various sectors to **envision what the future looks like for API communities in the next decade, build a bench of strong leaders, and learn strategies to make the deepest impact.**



This biennial event marks a significant opportunity for California API community members and organizations to empower themselves and their community at the California State Capitol.



Summit panel on **API Leadership Pipeline** featuring (clockwise from top left): **Annie Lam**, Founder, APIs Mobilize; **Sheng Thao**, Councilmember, Oakland; **Lisa Thong**, President, Board of Barbering and Cosmetology; **Mona Pasquil Rogers**, California Women Lead, Former Appointments Secretary in the Office of Gov. Jerry Brown & Gavin Newsom; **Richard Pan**, State Senator, District 6; and **Manufou Liaigi-Anoa'i**, Trustee, Jefferson Elementary School District



# HONORING API LEADERS



**Dr. Judy Sakaki**  
President, Sonoma State  
University

*Excellence in Education  
Honoree*

**2020 Asian Pacific  
Islander Heritage  
Month Celebration**



**Lisa Ling**  
Executive Producer and  
Host, "This is Life"

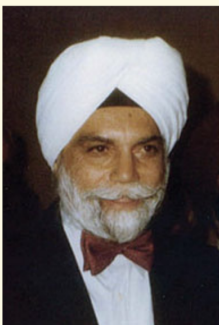

*Excellence in Journalism  
Honoree*

**2020 Asian Pacific  
Islander Heritage  
Month Celebration**

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to host our annual **Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Capitol Ceremony**. We recognized our four honorees in May with special videos featuring interviews and photos posted to our social media page. These individuals were honored for their tremendous contributions to the API community.

## 2020 Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Honorees

- Excellence in Education: **Dr. Judy Sakaki**, *President, Sonoma State University*
- Excellence in Journalism: **Lisa Ling**, *Executive Producer and Host, "This is Life"*
- Excellence in Philanthropy: **Dr. Amarjit Singh Marwah**
- Excellence in Public Service: **Andrew Yang**, *Fmr. 2020 Presidential Candidate*



**Dr. Amarjit Singh  
Marwah**

*Excellence in  
Philanthropy*

**2020 Asian Pacific  
Islander Heritage  
Month Celebration**



**Andrew Yang**  
Former 2020 Presidential  
Candidate

*Excellence in Public  
Service Honoree*

**2020 Asian Pacific  
Islander Heritage  
Month Celebration**

# HONORING API LEADERS



The Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus would like to recognize the contributions of Assemblymember Kansen Chu (D-Milpitas) and Assemblymember Todd Gloria (D-San Diego) during their tenure in the California State Legislature. They have each championed legislation addressing our most urgent issues including language access, immigrant and refugee rights and housing and homelessness.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Assemblymember Todd Gloria on his election to be the first API and first openly LGBTQ mayor of San Diego, the second largest city in California. We wish Assemblymember Kansen Chu success as he continues on with his next chapter in public service.



# California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus



*From Left to Right: Assemblymember **Todd Gloria**, Assemblymember **Ash Kalra** (Parliamentarian), Assemblymember **Evan Low**, Assemblymember **Rob Bonta**, Assemblymember **Al Muratsuchi** (Vice Chair), Treasurer **Fiona Ma** (Honorary Member), Assemblymember **David Chiu** (Chair), Controller **Betty Yee** (Honorary Member), **Cat Nou** (Chief Consultant), Senator **Richard Pan** (Vice Chair), Assemblymember **Phil Ting**, Assemblymember **Adrin Nazarian**, Assemblymember **Ed Chau** and Assemblymember **Kansen Chu***

Follow us on social media: @APILegCaucus

[www.apicaucus.legislature.ca.gov](http://www.apicaucus.legislature.ca.gov)