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API Legislative Caucus Policy Priorities 2017

The California Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus represents and advocates for the interests of the diverse Asian & Pacific Islander American (APIA) communities throughout California. Furthermore, it seeks to increase APIA participation and representation in all levels of government.

The API Legislative Caucus established the following policy priorities to address issues important to the Asian & Pacific Islander American community.

Budget Priorities

Immigrant Rights

One California

One California is a crucial program to provide critical services, through qualified nonprofit organizations, for California's immigrant communities that may be eligible for citizenship or affirmative immigration remedies including the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The Caucus urged the Governor to include a \$30 million investment to support the education, outreach, and affirmative legal services provided by the One California program in the 2017-2018 State Budget.

- Status: The final budget approved by Governor Brown included \$45 million for the One California program which included additional funding for legal representation for removal defense proceedings.

Education

K-12

CalSTRS is a retirement program comprised of current, former, and retired teachers, administrators, and their beneficiaries; made up of about 880,000 members. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, when the Legislature passed the CalSTRS funding plan in 2014, about \$74 billion unfunded liability would be divided between the state of California, school districts, and teachers. CalPERS, another state employee retirement program, also has significant unfunded liability and recent actions taken by the CalPERS board have increased required school district contribution rates. A recent hearing by the Budget Subcommittee 2 on Education Finance revealed that, "Due to these changes, pension costs for districts have increased by approximately \$2 billion since 2013-14, and it is estimated these costs will continue to grow by an additional \$4.5 billion by 2020-21."

These STRS and PERS obligations have placed a significant financial burden on many school districts throughout the state. Several districts have reported that they will need to file qualified budgets over the coming years, as they will not be able to meet these pension obligations and sustain their normal district operations.

- Status: The final budget approved by Governor Brown included a one-time \$6 billion supplemental payment to CalPERS and \$5.2 billion for the state's annual pension contribution to CalPERS. Additionally, \$2.8 billion was allocated for state contributions to CalSTRS.

California State University Budget

The California State University (CSU) has a long tradition of providing access to higher education to Californians from different ethnic, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. With more than 475,000 students, the CSU awards nearly half of all bachelor's degrees in the state each year. The CSU annually graduates more than 100,000 students and also awards the most undergraduate degrees earned by African American (45%), Latino (54%) and Native American (46%) students in the state. Fully funding the CSU will ensure that more California students will have access to a quality college education and more opportunity for economic success. The Caucus urged the Governor to invest an additional \$168 million for the CSU in the final 2017-18 State Budget.

- Status: The final budget approved by Governor Brown included \$182.2 million in additional funding for CSUs, including funding to increase student enrollment.

Housing

Housing Funding

Since the Great Recession, California residents have seen a drop of 69 percent -- approximately \$1.7 billion -- in state investment towards the development and preservation of affordable homes each year. This dis-investment in housing has contributed to higher housing costs, a growing homeless population, increased pressures on local social safety nets, unstable development and construction marketplaces, and the departure of tens of thousands of long-time Californians. More than 6.3 million Asian Americans call California home, and the current housing crisis affects everyone. Last year, Assembly Democrats put forward a \$1.3 billion budget request for a one-time investment into various state affordable housing programs. That request was reduced in the budget process to \$400 million, contingent on the adoption of streamlining proposals, which ultimately failed to gain traction. This year, the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on State Administration reallocated those funds back to affordable housing programs. The Caucus requested that this item be enacted in the 2017-2018 State Budget to provide California with the stable, ongoing, and permanent funding it needs to solve the housing crisis.

- Status: The final budget approved by Governor Brown did not include additional funding to address the affordable housing crisis. Instead, a package of legislation was negotiated and approved by the Legislature in early September. Caucus member and Chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development, Assemblymember David Chiu, led these efforts with the support of the Caucus. The bills have been signed by the Governor.

Legislative Priorities

Immigrant Rights:

AB 291 (Chiu) – Immigrant Tenant Protection Act

Tenants across the state are being targeted based on their suspected immigration status. This bill protects tenants from deportation threats and extends many of the protections that exist in employment law to landlord-tenant law.

In the course of business, landlords learn a lot about tenants: their social security numbers, the languages they speak, the times they're at home, and the identities of their families and friends. Tenants have virtually no legal protections against misuse of this information. While most landlords are scrupulous, a minority regularly threaten to report tenants to immigration authorities, either to retaliate against those who raise habitability and repair issues, or to circumvent the statutory eviction process.

Under AB 291, tenants would gain new protections from discrimination based on immigration status. These include a ban on questions about immigration status in housing-related cases, and a prohibition on attorney threats to report tenants to immigration authorities. Landlords would also be barred from threatening to report tenants, or actually disclosing information about tenants' citizenship status, to the authorities. Landlords who do report their tenants to immigration authorities could be sued for damages. Versions of many of these protections already exist in employment law, and it only makes sense to extend them to landlord-tenant law. The bill provides necessary exemptions to these provisions to safeguard landlords who are complying with federal law.

- Status: This measure was approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

AB 450 (Chiu) – Workplace Immigration Protection Act of 2017

This bill prevents federal immigration enforcement action at a worksite from violating the due process, labor, and privacy rights of California workers.

It is a frightening time to be an immigrant in the United States. This fear is especially real for 11 million immigrants undocumented because of Congress's failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform. In the first few months of 2017, Trump has issued two unconstitutional Executive orders, more than doubled the arrests of immigrants with no criminal records and proposed hiring 10k new ICE agents. With the proposal of 10k new ICE agents, we anticipate worksite raids are next. Worksite raids are problematic because they are disruptive and potentially violent - which is bad for business as well as workers; they decrease the likelihood of workers reporting labor violations; they allow unscrupulous employers to threaten to call ICE, particularly if there's enforcement of labor, health or safety protections.

AB 450 establishes a series of safeguards during worksite enforcement actions to protect all workers from potential abuse. To ensure that the employees' due process rights, labor rights, and health and safety rights are protected at the workplace, employers may only allow access to the worksite when presented with a judicial warrant and access to confidential employee information with a subpoena. The bill asks employers who receive

notice of a worksite enforcement action to notify the employee and the Labor Commissioner; and it provides workers who are critical to the investigation of a labor claim to receive certification from the Labor Commissioner that the worker is central to this investigation.

Much of California's workforce and economy is dependent on immigrant labor. We must stand united with our immigrant workforce, who oftentimes work the harshest occupations available.

- Status: This measure was approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

AB 1575 (Kalra) – Professional Cosmetics Ingredients Listing

Cosmetic products fall into two categories: retail and professional. While retail cosmetic manufacturers are required to label all ingredients for transparency to consumers, professional cosmetic products—marketed to salon owners and used by professionals—are not.

The initiative to label all retail cosmetic products ensures that consumers have access to the names of the chemicals they apply to their hair, skin, and nails. This transparency serves to inform consumers and allow the public at large to become more aware of and conduct research on potential hazardous chemicals and compounds.

Due to such vagueness in labeling known toxicants and lack of labeling for other chemicals of unknown nature, there is an urgent need for transparency in the professional cosmetic industry.

This bill elevates the labeling standard of professional cosmetic products to that of retail cosmetic products. By requiring manufacturers to list ingredients on the labels of all professional cosmetic products, individuals and the beauty salon industry can take steps to avoid or limit exposure to hazardous chemicals. This will prevent the prevalence of adverse health impacts associated with these hazardous chemicals.

- Status: Held in Senate Appropriations Committee

Education

AB 21 (Kalra) – Protecting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

This bill seeks to reduce the impact that the current federal administration can potentially enforce on immigration issues. California houses many immigrant students enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. AB 21 will ensure that students have access to their financial aid, legal representation, and their constitutional right to due process.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported that in 2013, 83 percent of people deported from the United States were not given a hearing before a judge. In order to protect students, we must make sure that they have the right to due process and be afforded their Fourth Amendment right to the Constitution.

- Status: This measure was approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

AB 491 (Muratsuchi) – California Civil Liberties Public Education Act

The California Civil Liberties Public Education Act would establish a grant program that would sponsor public educational activities and the development of resources to ensure that all history and events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of civilians and immigrants of Japanese ancestry will be remembered and taught. With our current political climate and threats to our immigrants and ethnic minorities throughout California, it is important that we provide our students the right background and facts regarding our nation's immigrant history. This measure would extend funding for the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program through continuous appropriation of \$3 million from the General Fund to the State Librarian over the 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 fiscal years.

- Status: This measure was approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

AB 1622 (Low) – DREAM Resource Center

This bill requires California Community Colleges (CCC), California State Universities (CSU), and school districts who oversee high schools to have a designated "Dream Resource Liaison" who is knowledgeable about all resources available to undocumented students in order to provide adequate support.

AB 1622 encourages institutions of higher education and high schools to create a Dream Resource Center on their campus. Having such Centers on school campuses would allow all students to feel safe in their educational journeys and provide them resources in order to reach their full potential. Several campuses such as UCLA, UC Davis, CSU Los Angeles, CSU Fullerton, CSU Northridge, and many others have created Dream Resource Centers on their campuses, providing a haven for their undocumented students, who face increasing challenges every day.

Every year, about 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high schools in the United States. The Public Policy Institute of California reports that, "On average, college graduates earn significantly higher wages than those with a high school diploma only, a phenomenon known as the college wage premium." California prides itself in its diverse and abundant education system. When students graduate successfully, our economy and overall well-being succeed immensely.

- Status: Held in Assembly Appropriations Committee

For questions about the API Legislative Caucus' Budget and Legislative priorities, please contact Cat Nou, API Legislative Caucus Chief Consultant, at (916) 319-3686 or cat.nou@asm.ca.gov.