



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus Announces Support for ACA 5**

*ACA 5 will allow voters to repeal affirmative action ban*

**Sacramento, CA** - Assemblymember David Chiu, Chair of the California Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus, released the following statement as the API Legislative Caucus voted to endorse ACA 5:

“The Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus joins over 100 other organizations and community leaders representing hundreds of thousands of Asian Pacific Islanders to support ACA 5. This measure would lift the affirmative action ban imposed by Proposition 209 in 1996. Removing the ban will allow for more equal opportunities in public contracting, public employment, and public education for all, including Asian Americans.

In public contracting, Proposition 209 caused minority and women-owned businesses to lose over \$1 billion a year in government contracts. Asian American-owned businesses have won more contracts in cities like Atlanta or Chicago where affirmative action is legal, compared to San Francisco with the oldest and one of the largest Asian communities in the country.

In public employment, Asian Americans want more representation and diversity in positions such as teachers, school principals and university presidents. We want first responders, firefighters, and bilingual police officers who come from and understand our community. Prop 209 currently prevents that.

In public education, it is important that myths are replaced with facts. First, universities that practice affirmative action have seen greater gains in Asian American enrollment than schools that do not. Second, API admission rates to the University of California--including UC Berkeley and UCLA--have decreased since 1996, after Prop 209 was passed. Third, if ACA 5 passes,

public institutions would still never be allowed to establish racial quotas; the US Supreme Court has already banned the use of quotas in university admissions in its 1978 *Bakke* case.

Our legislature's passage of ACA 5 would not establish affirmative action on its own. A quarter century after Prop 209's passage, ACA 5 would give a new generation of voters the opportunity to decide whether we are doing enough to address racial and gender disparities. If ACA 5 passes, it would simply lift the ban. Local and state governments would then have to engage with the public to consider new programs to address these disparities - such as STEM camps for girls, programs to increase doctors in underrepresented communities, or assistance to Asian-owned businesses decimated by COVID-19 racism.

While surveys show a strong majority of our Asian American communities support bringing back affirmative action, we know not all of our communities are yet convinced. We look forward to engaging with the diversity of our API communities to build consensus on how we move everyone forward to truly make California a state of equal opportunity for all."

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*Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco) is Chair of the API Legislative Caucus and Chair of the Housing & Community Development Committee of the California State Assembly. He represents the 17th Assembly District, which encompasses eastern San Francisco. Learn more at <https://a17.asmdc.org/>*