

## Session 2

### **AAPI Policy Summit: Moving from Collective Knowledge to Action**

**Moderator:** Lisa Hasegawa

**Researchers:** Dr. Lois Takahashi

**Community Reactors:** Joyce Pisnanont

**Policy Reactor:** Hon. Assemblyman Phil Ting

Lisa was a policy advisor at the Asian American Studies Center

#### **Researchers:**

- Assemblymember Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District and much of Northern California
  - He served in the Assembly Budget Committee
- Dr. Lois Takahashi from USC, interim dean for the UCLA Luskin School of Affairs
- Joyce Pisnanont has worked at National Capacity, and is the Chief Strategy and Impact Officer
  - The coalition for AAPI Policy Development
  - “The kid of National Capacity”
- This topic of AAPI Housing has been a topic of discussion for many years with Community Based Organizations and AAPI Policy Development Orgs
- Lisa: Houselessness looks very different for different ethnic communities, and it’s not a competition of who’s worse off, but rather we need to lock arms with the Latinx and Black community
- Lois: Paper titled “Invisible and Hidden AANHPI Homelessness in California: How many AANHPIs are homeless and what can we do?”
  - Co-authored by Alycia Cheng, Melany De La Cruz-Viesca, and Cinit Mukhija, who are here at the AAPI Policy Summit
  - Thanked AAPI Data/UC Riverside and the interviewees
- Lois discusses the data of the Total Persons Experiencing Homelessness from the 2022 HUD Point-In-Time Counts
  - This data determines where money goes from the feds
  - Los Angeles County has the highest count of homelessness

- 1642 unhoused AANHPIs in LA accounting to the HUD PIT Count
- In the 2022-2023 CA Dept of Education Homeless Student Enrollment, the gap of 1700+ in Los Angeles alone in comparison to the HUD PIT count.
  - 1700 more that they're tracking than the HUD PIT is counting
- Public information for the 2022-2023 Statewide Homeless Student Enrollment by Dwelling Type
  - 11% of Asian Americans live in Temporary Shelters, but by far compared to other communities, the temporarily doubled-up percentage is 74.9%.
  - The team thought, “How can we think about the “temporarily doubled-up” data with respect to the AAPI community?”
- In between those, the census goes around and samples people and puts together the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates by Race and Ethnicity
  - Shows overcrowding by racial-ethnic groups
  - The line shows all households, and 33% of NHOPI households in Fresno report being overcrowded
    - More than any racial/ethnic community reported
  - There tends to be differences in whos overcrowded and how
- They interviewed community leaders, one stating, “Here in the Inland Empire, there can be as many as 10 to 25 NHOPI family members living under a single roof.”
- In our community don't see themselves as homeless, because they are living with family, and because they don't want to be labeled as homeless
- Our communities will be very reluctant to ask for homeless services because they're worried the city will say they're not taking care of their kids and take their children away.
- Findings:
  - There are large gaps between US HUD PIT Counts and CA DOE K-12 enrollment data; US HUD PIT Counts are used for federal funding decisions
    - The funding comes from this data
  - The gaps between HUD PIT Count and CA DOE K-12 very by county, LA was highlighted because there was such a massive gap
  - When using overcrowding as a measure of huddle or invisible homelessness, NHPIs are more overcrowded in specific counties than all other racial ethnic groups
    - Speaks on the hidden homelessness and disconnect from support services
  - AANHPIs are reluctant to access for homeless care
- Next steps:
  - Triangulate data from state K-12 enrollment database with US HUD PIT Counts for policy decision making
  - Enhance community assets that are being used to keep AANHPIs from living on the streets

- The overcrowding shows that community assistance is already embedded to avoid homelessness
- Use “overcrowding” as a way to identify neighborhoods, cities, and counties with large proportions at risk for homelessness; create “risk zones” maps for resource targeting for homelessness prevention
- Support more research - refine measures of housing instability and precarity catalog the resilience in AANHPI communities used to keep people off the streets, outline and evaluate policy strategies to augment these resilience strategies
  - Catalog the resilience because they are already taking in people, talk about what that looks like
  - THink about what’s affective and what they need, then think
  - Email: lmtakaha@usc.edu

### **Community Reactors:**

- Talking a little bit first about national capacity
  - Almost a 25 year old organization
  - Now has 4 legs; focus on policies at a federal level, work as a convener and bring together AAPI orgs, serve as an international intermediary, and are launching a CDFI (community development financial institution) to finance the initiatives the AAPI community wants to do
- Our intermediary was started at 2010 in response to the housing closure crisis
- They pass funding from HUD to AAPI organizations that provide services in over 20 languages to service the AAPI community
- In many instances those services are the only ones in the area providing services for their community
- What they found is that when they looked at organizations, national capacity serves the lowest income levels on AAPI and serve the most individuals with Limited English Learning Proficiency
- AA and NHPIs confront a disproportionate risk of displacement compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the US
  - 53% of all AA and NHPIs live in the 15 MSAs with median monthly rents above the US median
- “How are people paying the rent? They would rather cut down on grocery costs. They would rather pay the rent, which is 80% of their income”
- There’s high housing cost and that's impacting the financial security of their clients
- An estimated 51.1% of income goes to rent
- When data is disaggregated, for certain AA and NHPI groups, there’s significant rent burden
  - Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Korean, Pakistani, Thai, etc. + NHPI Samoan, Tongan, and Native Hawaiian actually have a higher percentage of rent burden.

- Particular communities are impacted by rent burden
- In specific MSAs there are high rent burdens
  - In LA, 61% of NHPI are rent burdened

- This housing crisis was really increased due to the pandemic
- The housing crisis within the AAPI community is truly hidden, as the community is choosing to live with friends and family than to live on the street
- The housing overcrowding is really pronounced in AA and NHPI communities
- Addressing issues in CA will address issues of housing insecurity for a sign. Pop. of AA and NHPIs living in poverty nationally
- Severely cost-burdened Asian households are 6x most likely to be LEP than white households
- Displacement is occurring at a faster pace
- National Capacity focuses on a national level, how can we give advice to California legislators
  - We need federally-established national floor for tenants' rights and equitable development policies
  - We need to strengthen fair housing protections and equitable housing finance to increase access to safe and affordable housing opportunities for people who have been historically excluded from the housing market
  - What's happening in the federal level and how does that play out on the streets
  - They are funding for more language access programs which has helped them serve thousands of AA and NHPIs that are experiencing housing difficulties.

### **Policy Reactors:**

- Starts off by putting the conference and ethnic studies in context of the first panel, as he is a product of Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley
- The creation of Ethnic studies didn't happen by accident, but rather the challenge from ethnic studies is that the complete founding was about political activism and engaging with the community, which is an ongoing discussion within the academic ethnic studies
- Focus on political change, because it's not enough just to talk about policies and change
- One of his greater concerns is that when we have become more mature and academic, we fall into the trap of what Poli Sci is etc
- We would be fine if those departments remained academic, but if Asian AM Studies falls on that path it would be a failure because we would fail the key part of what's happening
- We are invisible; the main reason why so much AANHPI issues do not get addressed
- How do you go through life and not be seen? When he went to grad school in Boston the complete racial construct in the east coast, there was not even room for Latinos. They had no clue how to categorize Asian Americans

- In LA there's a huge population of every ethnic group but we still remain invisible, because we fall into this trap where parents tell us to study and get into college then things will be good
- We think that just obtaining the data needed with guarantee policy outcomes, but that's completely false
- We need to marry data with political participation, activism, and protests
- The community remains invisible despite added representation in political spaces, and our issues are not the priorities of many policy makers

- In Sacramento, even though policy makers will participate in cultural events, there is still invisibility policy wise to address these issues
- Us as a community, we have to come up with compelling stories and compelling narratives/policy narratives
- What we have been asking for is fighting against narratives like health care, education, drug overdoses, border issues, police brutality, etc. so our issues of disaggregated data and language, which struggles do you tackle as a policy maker.
  - Those are such low asks, that how is our community so weak that we haven't been able to accomplish this simple task
  - Were the only community not going into President Biden's cabinet of Secretary
- What do we do?
  - Part of our challenge is all the different levels of the Asian communities.
    - The struggles are so disaggregated by community, they must be organized and united
  - We have communities that are afraid of being political
    - They will ask for money, but won't support you politically. Most interesting report that came out two months ago is all the appointments the government made by race, but Asian Americans didn't show up.
    - This is something we all have to decide and get involved in
    - This conference shouldn't be in LA, we are in a bubble where we are talking and agreeing amongst ourselves. This conference should be in Sacramento or other places that we can unionize and change minds
  - We need to be honest about the policies that need to occur
    - A lot of advocates on these issues are not Asian American.
    - Language access has been a large issue even with the Latino community which is a large community with power, how is it that we haven't been able to get this done?
      - We haven't been strategic in how we tackle this and pressure the government.
  - The schools care about the youth data, and that's an easy marriage of the youth issue, there's a lot of folks with skin in the game and money
  - A lot of this community says, "Give me money" instead of, "How can we work with you to address this issue."
    - There has to be more intersection with what's actually happening in our community (data) and what we're actually doing about it.
    - We need to highlight that data that's hidden, but also advocate for it and work on it. These issues aren't talked about in our community
    - There's an arrow and a tip, you need something you can drive, you have to be talking amongst ourselves, to government policy makers both Asian and not, and also intersecting with our community.
    - Everyone's thinking about how we can solve the big issues, but you need to give them solutions on these issues and how to help.
    - How do we get involved and elevate ourselves, because people think our community is fine and we're doing great. Again, it's really about making

sure that we are creating a narrative/picture of where our community really needs help to fight for our needs with policy makers

### **Action Discussion:**

- Lisa says it's really difficult now more so due to the budget reform, she doesn't know how that's happened but she's sure it's not fun
- This is not about money, he issued a call for a clear political message and policy making, and the end result is that you need money for that, but if you are just asking for more money, there's a long line of people asking for more money who need it just as much. If you are lining up with homelessness kids, foster kids, we will lose because they are the priority.
  - This is where we have to be better at articulating what our needs are and elevating that to the public
- I think that there are very few issues that capacity felt we couldn't move that on our own federally
- Joyce says Phil's comment on narrative shift really resonated, as recognition that it's hard to move this needle if we aren't shaping this in a main way. Part of that struggle is targeting who is the communities we need to highlight in that
- Moderator recalls the same week there was an article in the news of a Lao family who died in their van, they were homeless, and there were protesters in Irvine who were protesting for housing for the homeless. In a conference, people thought that family was Latino, there's the narrative that this isn't an issue even in our community
- Amy Philipps is with Little Tokyo Service Center, she feels like even when there is money, it's not set up to be accessible to the AAPI community, and that has to do with zip codes
  - It's so fragmented, example for the LA County, they only want one provider zip code for elder care but we are so spread out that they can't expect assistance in just that one zip code as the main governmental support that the county gave them.
  - How can we break free from this mentality and have services more accessible
  - Phil states that first a bureaucrat made that decision probably did that to make his life easier. It's really about applying yourself with those community groups spread out and bringing it to the Board of Supervisors to think about how they're serving their community. Making sure they understand that and articulate that argument to policy makers
- Social Worker and Non Profit Exec. runs housing sites, his question is this whole narrative shifting, the importance of addressing this from intersectionality and stigma. All of these issues are big and how do you tackle this by level
  - Joyce mentions stigma in our piece because it's a big reason why people who are eligible for services won't ask for it, because they think homelessness will make the government take their kids away.
  - They need to ensure and build trust that this won't happen in the community
  - Another thing is that there's multiple things that result in homelessness (intersectionality) it becomes really difficult to address. The next project is how to



strategize navigating that. She doesn't know the answer, but she knows it's a problem that a lot of us in this room need to figure out

- National Capacity has a big push to invest in political education in the staff of these service providers, if it's not carried through the entire organization, it won't reach the people they are helping and won't tell policy makers that these organizations and services are necessary
  - It's not just can I run a program better, it's how can I encourage my staff to think about it like that too
- A Public Policy Student and Pilipino Organizer, asks what are the effects of historic discrimination (red-lining, immigration, etc.) on AAPI communities, and what policy steps can we take to negate those impacts.
  - Assemblyman isn't gonna go to a history lesson, but we see there are remnants of those historic discriminations, but the critical issue is addressing the stigma issue in the community, and how can the community look at these issues. The other piece is trying to articulate a clearer vision on these homelessness struggles and advocacy. It really depends on the community
- Ethnic media services who were on the panel with another journalist, who can't forget this survey resulting in the Hispanic community there will be jobs, for Asian communities, more education, Black communities, regulation, White communities, traffic. Unfortunately we have a crisis of Anti-Asian Hate. He has never seen an issue that galvanized Asian issues like now that requires governmental support. Does the Assemblyman think this could be the thing to unionize communities together.
  - He does think so, but it's all based on flash-points and it's hard to sustain that spark. The main issue in our community is education, but it's also an acknowledgement of the community's priorities and how to acknowledge it. The issue is that we are out performing, so where do we go. Stopping AAPI Hate was a flashpoint, and the government did try to advocate for that well financially, almost 200 million dollars in the past 4 years. Reflection that they were at the right place and time to take advantage of that situation, but it gives us resources to think about issues, but it's not the issue to sustain us and we need something much more systemic
  - Someone comments that it's one thing to say narrative shifts are needed, but it's much harder to do then Phil states. Narratives in housing and homelessness, he's really thinking there's an important opportunity in the assembly to think through. No matter how much we say, "Look at this example." We sound totally insensitive in comparison to other communities. His narrative suggestion to overcrowding relates to the causes of overcrowding. Use that as the hook to say we need to take care of overcrowding alongside homelessness, using AAPI deaths due to overcrowding as the tip of the spear. This is a new angle and something people can get behind. Pick your battles on what research to do and address
  - Moderator comments that housing before was never going to be a top 3 issue, is there a broader housing platform where we can visibly get AAPI to back?

- Assemblyman notes that it's easy to partner with youth advocates and districts that are dealing with youth homelessness. It's easy to unite with communities that are similarly experiencing overcrowding such as with Latinos. That's where he feels like we need to be more strategic to run a campaign on it and get those stories in the press and target county officials etc. to start thinking about that. There are systematic ways to think about those issues and more that aren't hard to replicate
- Someone notes this is one of the most profound discussions they have had today, one that's a non-profit indoor church organization that's been there for 20 years. This Hindu non-profit focuses on being service driven, he was going to talk about mental health. What she would like to ask is that given that we need time, pressure, talent, and all the resources put together across the board, how do we take action steps? How can we actively contribute because they have been working with the homeless and providing food, shelter, and basic necessities and mental health empowerment. How can they start today to be a part of policy and solution?
  - National Capacity comments that it's a really big question, and how do we mobilize others in our community, and how do we make it visible? Thinking about overcrowding being the tip of the spear, one of the things she thought was that none of them on the panel are NHPI, so she thinks organizing and capacity building should be visible
  - Assemblyman comments that this organization already has grounds that they are using to assist the community. They can partner with other non-profits and communities to address systemic issues. They are providing immediate assistance, but they can partner together to address the systemic root issue. How do you plug into that and leverage your organization and membership in the space
- Grad student at Public Health and advocacy chair for the UCLA Mobile clinic, her question is, as students they are trying to develop a resolution to keep councilmen accountable to address these issues. What are some policies that can address these hidden issues with marginalized communities?
  - The Assemblyman argues that they are going for the wrong people. They need to target the county supervisors, people that they haven't even heard of. Five supervisors run the public health department funding their mobile healthcare initiative that they should be talking to. It's really making sure you are holding the right people accountable and hooking up with people here working in the healthcare space that can help with their advocacy
- The Little Tokyo Service Center Community Engagement Specialist was wondering in this conversation, asking how important it is to also address Anti-Blackness, and why aren't we already addressing these issues. How do we marry that and get people to talk about it?

- Assemblyman notes that he agrees with being tone-deaf and not acknowledging other groups, he thinks we are the first community to support and back up other people's issues. It's important to address other issues and what's going on, but he will tell you everyone is putting themselves first in the state. No one is allying

with the Asian Americans in the State, so his thing is we need to articulate our priorities and fight for them because no one else will.