

SESSION 4

A Call to Action: Policy Recommendations and Bringing Community to the Capitol

Moderator: Chanchanit Martorell (Executive Director of the Thai Community Development Center)

Panelists:

- Faith Lee (Legislative Director of Asian American Advancing Justice Southern California (AJSOCAL))
- Karla Thomas (Co-Executive Director of Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC))
- Richard Calvin Chang (Director of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Data Policy Lab)
- Dr. Angelica Cortez (Executive Director of LEAD Filipino and Senior Vice President of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Pacific Clinics)
- Priscilla Wang (Executive Director of the Center for Asian Americans in Action)

Policy Reactor: Mike Fong (Assembly Vice Chair of the AAPI Legislative Caucus & Assembly Member to the 49th District)

“The aim of this panel is to highlight how advocacy organizations have turned UCLA research into action”

1. Faith Lee:

- Goal: AJSOCAL Priorities and UCLA Researchers
 - Policy Theme: Combat Asian Invisibility (2023-2024) through FOUR Initiatives
 - “Want to truly tell our stories in Sacramento and educate staffers to combat Asian invisibility because our experiences should be recognized in Sacramento”
 - 1) BOSES Grant (Bilingual Oriented Social Equity Services): language accessibility, bilingual speakers should be incentivized to use their skills to stay in the workforce and work with our “limited English speaking Californians”
 - 2) Break Down the “Other” Act (AB 943 KALRA) : “Requires the department to prepare and publish monthly demographic data, based on voluntary self-identification information from people admitted, in custody, and released and paroled, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, as specified.”
 - Current Categories (4): Black, White, Hispanic, and Other

- How can we help Asian/Asian-Americans in prisons to provide a language parole process & how can we help them to work through the parole process if they need it?
 - 3) CA AB 1248, Local redistricting, independent redistricting commissions
 - 4) Rep 4 All
 - “Enhance and expand legal services for immigrants”
 - “Currently, if immigrants have any sort of contact with the legal system, they are excluded”
 - Therefore, regardless of past history with criminal justice system, they will have representation
 - UCLA Research will help to tell stories and provide data that is necessary to take to Sacramento
 - For example, how Asian Americans have been treated in California in the past
 - Universal representation for all of us
- CURRENT STATUS OF BILLS
 - BOSES Grant was partially included in the budget last year
 - AB 943 bill is currently signed
 - AB 1248, part of it was vetoed by the government
 - Bringing Rep 4All back this year
- We need more people to continue telling legislators who we are and the needs of our community
- This year the theme is: “OUR UNTOLD STORIES”
 - BOSES Grant
 - AB 2444 (in collaboration with)
 - CA Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative
 - Labor Education for Barber and Cosmetology Workers (that they should no longer be considered private contractors)
 - Trafficking Research and Analysis to Counter Exploitation (TRACE)
 - Legacy Admissions Ban (AB 1780 TING)
- Actual call to action:
 - Inclusive policy making
 - “What do I mean by inclusive?” → Budget ask to investigate human trafficking across the state, i.e 150 interviewees = 0 Asian people
 - Need for: transportation stipend, interpreters, etc.
 - Safeguarding implementation
 - Data desegregation in Healthcare, speak up to ask auditor, and our agency to wrap up their efforts

- Asking community and organizations to speak and tell untold stories
- Follow them on Social Media: Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California

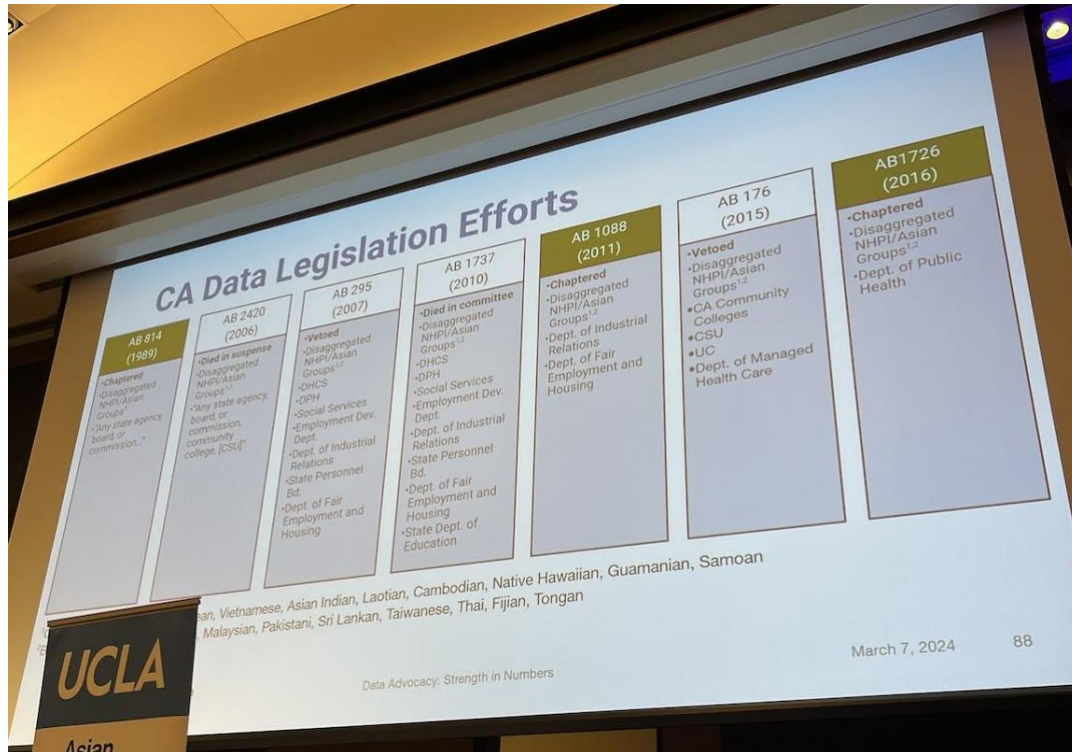
2. **Karla Thomas:** Co-Executive Director of Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

- EPIC = Advances justice for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through research, advocacy, and narrative change
- Benefited specifically from research with and by Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
 - LAST YEAR in the summit discussed:
 - Language accessibility, data desegregation, etc.
 - Stemmed from the pandemic and became more urgent
 - NHPI CPO's provide direct services and provide clear policy recommendations
- “However, a lot of our communities do have limited capacity to provide legislative advocacy, especially at the State level– in equity and social justice”
- EPIC has translated these into several tangible actions since last year, NO policy actions without NHPI in mind
 - 1) Built Communities Package, 3,000 bills introduced → narrowed down to 12 (data desegregation, voting rights, education, health, etc.)
 - FOR EXAMPLE, AB 943: desegregate data on NHPI incarcerated folks
 - Newsom did sign this bill
 - 2) Bill Tracker, community can easily follow bills and how they move during the legislative cycle
 - “Our people should understand how our bills move into law, especially since they are so jargon-y and can be hard to understand”
 - 3) NHPI Power Building Advisory Groups
 - Communities should be in the faces of our assembly members or at the capitol
 - Local community members who are based in Sacramento to build and strengthen policy
- Current Initiatives and Policies of this Year
 - 1) Build capacity of our communities to engage in local policy & be civically engaged
 - i.e recently wrapped up phone banking efforts
 - 2) Strengthen the Sacramento NHPI Population
 - Co-collaborating to encourage members to be civically engaged
 - 3) Prioritize successful implementation of CA AB 1726
 - Implementation was supposed to happen in Summer 2022
 - EPIC was a co-collaborator of in 2016
 - 4) Updating EPIC policy blueprint since the last time it was updated was a decade ago

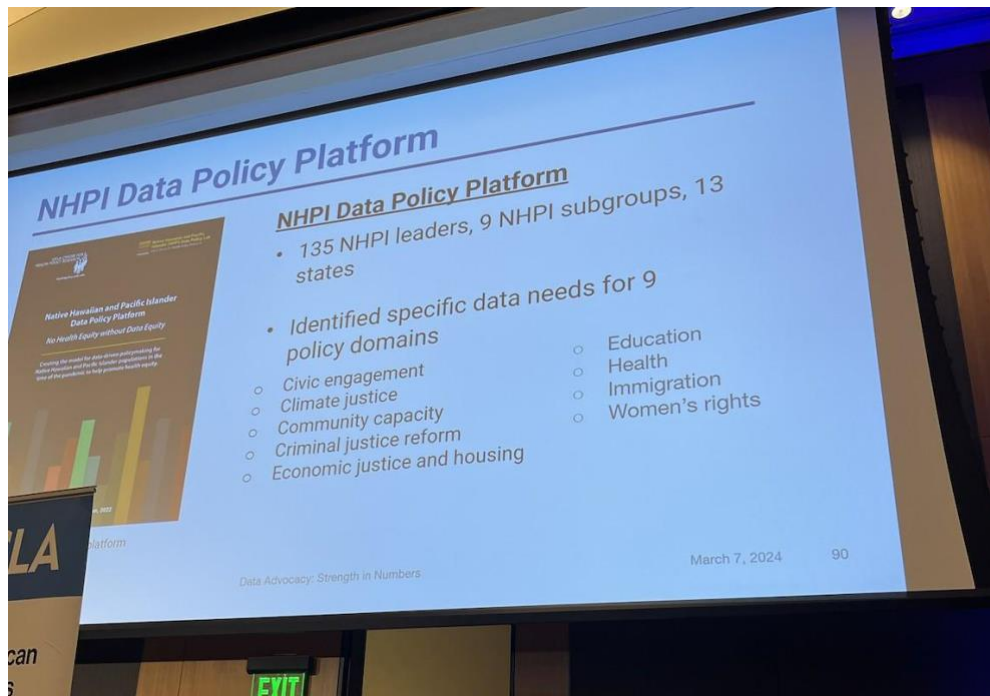
- 5) “Keep convening to make sure that no policy decision happens without the voice of our community”
- Challenge: “Help our folks address issues and what is impacting us, and how can we also ensure that folks are along for the ride after bills are signed into law?”
 - Recognize that we need support from policy makers and community members
- Another challenge: Legislative cycle is not rooted in indigeneity
 - “Our community does not make decisions at the same timeline as policy makers”
 - For thousands of years, this has not been how we make decisions in our communities
 - ASK: “That our community is better understood in this process especially in relation to the US”
- Closing Samoan Proverb:
 - “We are from different parts of the forest but connected in one cause”

3. Richard Calvin Chang: Director of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Data Policy Lab at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

- Builds data processes that allows community organizations to get resources for the community and build the capacity of our community to be able to work with data
- “‘It’s expensive to be poor’ -James Baldwin and I would add that ‘it’s expensive to be invisible’”
 - i.e During COVID, we were misrepresented and underrepresented the most
 - “Grandparents in the household, and the cultural repository that our grandparents represent pass that along to their grandchildren”
 - When that data was severed, it was the equivalent of watching libraries burn
 - Who in our communities were being affected = our grandparents and elders
 - “Therefore, data is very much a top line issue for NHPI”
- Direct line can be drawn between civil rights movement and data collection
 - It is because of civil rights legislation that racial and ethnic standards were set
 - 25 years ago, when NHPI was desegregated from Asian-Americans
 - California, AB295

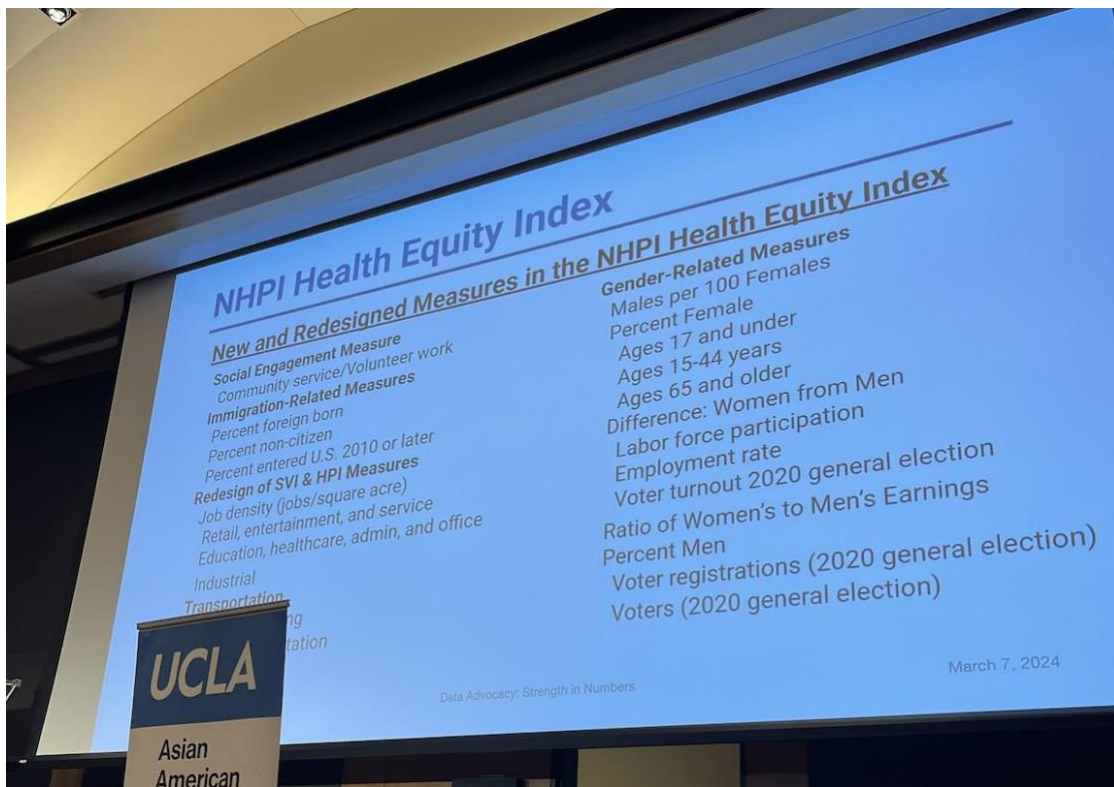


- The only bills that have been chaptered are the ones in green
- 2) Development of NHPI Data Policy Platform
 - 135 NHPI leaders across, 9 NHPI subgroups, 13 states had feedback
 - Identified specific data needs for 9 policy domains:



- 3) Research: NHPI Health Equity Index

- During COVID
- Healthy Places Index (designed not for Covid, but for social economic indicators at birth)
- “Failed to identify areas where our communities lived”
 - Problem: Existing indicators do not adequately capture needs within NHPI
 - Median Household Income
 - Makes us look more wealthy without recognizing that there are many people living within the household
- Therefore, constructing Index by asking for input from the community
 - “What type of measures define our communities? Why do we need to leave it up to other organizations?”

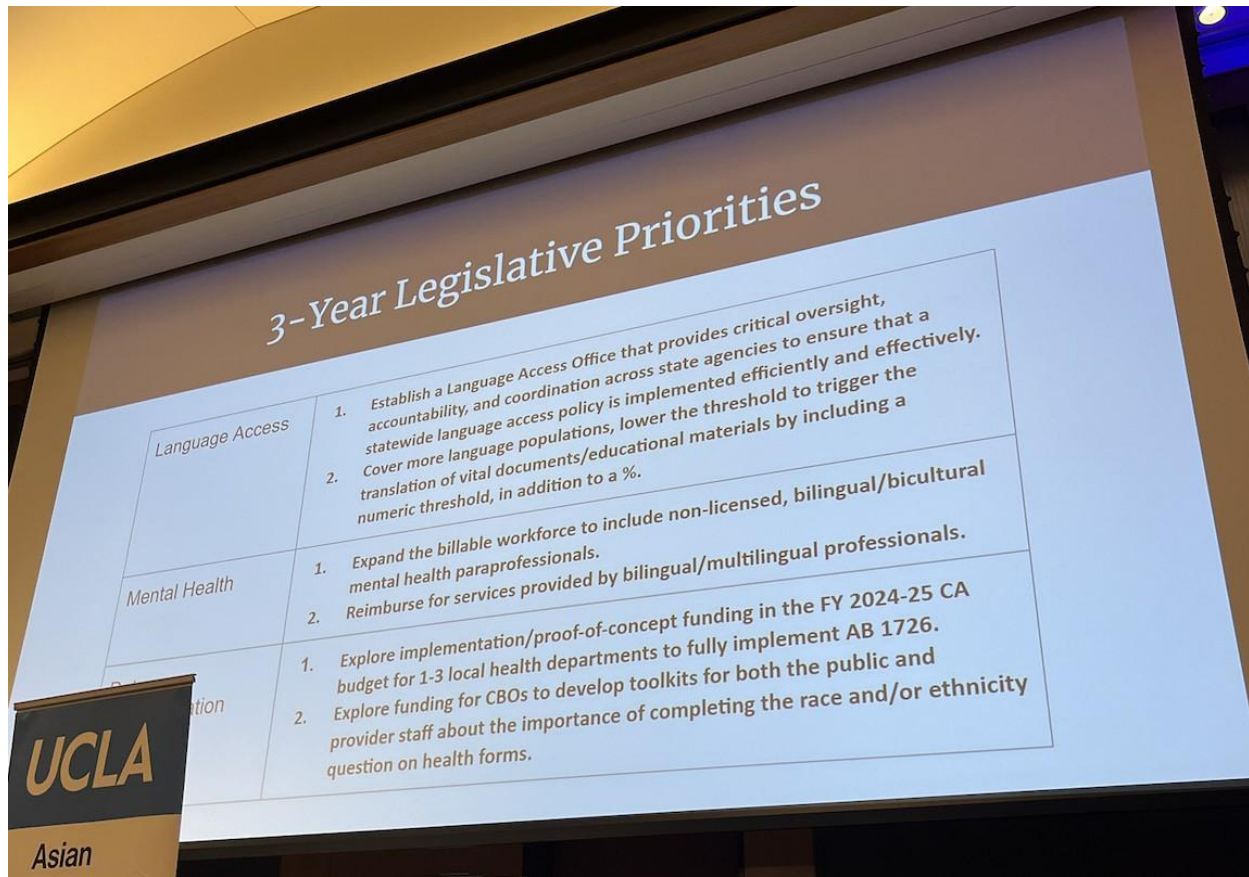


- Trying to get this accepted by California Public Health
- 4) Developing data tools to make our data more accessible to the community
 - NHPIs AHEAD (Advancing Health Equity and Addressing Disparities)
 - Accessible, understandable, and lowers the barrier
 - Set of Data Trainings (3 modules) for the community
 - 1) Understanding data
 - 2) Accessing data
 - 3) Using data
 - Surveyed and people would like to learn how to use data at their daily work:
 - 4 examples: 1) using data for policy, 2) educational presentations for our own community, 3) grant writing, and 4) program development

- Recommendations:
 - Enforce current data disaggregation laws
 - Fund the county-state pipeline for AB1726
 - Invest in NHPI community organizations
 - Establish advisory groups with NHPI community leaders with agencies
 - Standardize and align data collection practices with proposed revisions to OMB 15
 - When a single race category (which California uses), you create a multiracial category in which NHPI people end up
 - “Our numbers get cut in HALF”
- Engaging with NHPI Communities
 - Build relationships with Regional NHPI Coalitions
 - Note: Preferably not during a pandemic
 - Advocate Internally for Disaggregated Data
 - Community surveys, needs assessments, intake forms
 - “When you create a survey, do you have an other category?”
 - Seek Common Ground
 - Build coalitions and allies

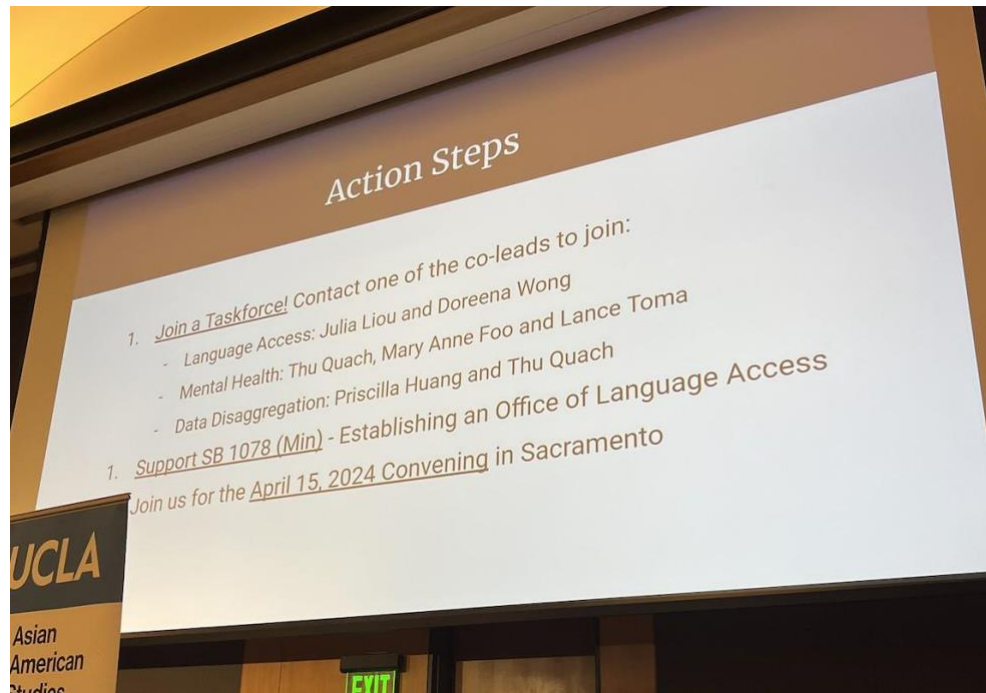
4. Angelica Cortez: Founder and Executive Director of LEAD Filipino and Senior Vice President of Justice, Equity, and Diversity, and Inclusion for Pacific Clinics

- Representing LEAD Filipino, FIERCE Coalition, Pilipino Workers Center, and Asian American Voter Empowerment Project
 - Grassroots-led and people-led initiatives
- Questions and considerations: “It’s one thing to have representation, and to continue advocating for that and building pipelines, but it’s ANOTHER TO REPRESENT”
 - To the donors in the room: “It’s one thing to use your social capital, your financial capital when you have something to lose”
 - All the pledges that were taken around racial justice, you see community organizations pulling out now
 - Collective call for human rights
- Asian American Voter Empowerment Project (AAVEP)
 - Report put out by the Asian American department at UCLA, ties together the voting rates and who is getting voted into office
 - And questions (2020-2022) “How are we penetrating or getting to different communities in LA?”
 - A series of GIS maps, there was a >25% of Asian-Americans
 - Trained 12 canvassers to do the work
- AND THROUGH
 - 1) LEAD Filipino



- **ACTION STEPS:**

- Note: Cross over efforts between the three groups which is that NHAAPI
- CDPH is creating a blueprint to highlight priority groups and NHAAPI is left out
 - Their response is “we don’t see disparities in NHAAPI communities”
 - If Prop 1 goes through, CDPH and the state will make funding implications and the local will be left out
- Join a task force!



- Please support SB1078

RESPONSE FROM MIKE FONG (5 questions that turned into 3)

- Question 1: “Now that you’ve heard the presentations, how can we take their recommendations and calls to action to the next level?”
 - Answers:
 - NHAAPI data desegregation is crucial (i.e in community colleges, higher education, etc.)
 - We have to push issues on the ground, and to CDPH, to do the advocacy every day
 - Voter engagement and voter registration, “I worked on ‘Rock the Vote’ and I would sit there for 2-3 hours and I would maybe register 2 people”
 - Identifying needs of the communities
 - 50 page paper needs to be condensed and the ask needs to be clear
 - Translation request (200 million budget request)
 - If another natural disaster happens, if 5% of the community speaks another language, they must get information out in the other language
 - Culturally competent and bilingual mental health workers
 - Getting out there in the community and for grassroot organizations, build bridges, make connections, and build relationships with staff members
 - For example, 10 million dollar request for multimedia textbooks here at UCLA
 - “In terms of getting something passed, it’s important to make sure that... you’re pushing the needle with agencies and bureaucracies. It’s important to raise your

voice.... Do social media, do press availability, do whatever you can to get your voice across the policy makers.”

- “It’s a tough budget year, but make sure to push the needle on what’s important to you”
 - You’re doing the hard work yourself, building relationships, and soon there are going to be a whole new group of people hired

- Question 2: “What are some initiatives that you have championed and are a part of?”
 - Answers:
 - “I believe in the philosophy from the ground up, it starts in the community”
 - You want to continue to build relationships with different offices, budget communities, assembly members, etc.
 - “I’ve only been in office for 2 years now, so shoutout to my team”
 - Signed 12 bills into law
 - SB 1354, AAPI History Bill
 - NHAAPI History is American History- celebrated in our K-12 education, putting them into the textbooks
 - Legislation around CA AB732, retrieves guns away from community members who should not have them, which stemmed from Monterey Park shooting
 - Increasing translation access
 - Expanding access to higher education, financial aid reform, etc.
 - “A lot of work ahead, good work ahead that we are a part of. Feel free to get in touch with my staff. Keep pushing.”

 - Question 3: “How have you engaged your AAPI constituents to rally around you and work with them?”
 - I’ve always been working with the neighborhood counsel, 200 elected neighborhood council leaders
 - Working with communities who are near and dear to my heart
 - We are proud to represent the West SGV, a majority of the communities I represent are NHAAPI
 - I had an event last week, providing events and forums every week. Reach out to your respective members, and I’ll be more than happy to support those folks. How can I uplift you and your prospects?
 - “I’ve always been a person who wants to serve the community.”

Community Reactions:

- Andrew: started a pop-up for civic engagement

- Question: “If we were to do a joint advocacy day in Sacramento this year, what would be the most effective strategies to 1) move the needle to get a bill passed and 2) a high turnout? What bills should we work on (i.e for the community, symbolic gestures, unrelated to the NHAAPI community, etc.)?”

Answer by Faith: The most effective approach would be to find a common purpose. When we talk about moving the needle, what do we want to accomplish? Language or desegregation? When we show up, what are our common strategies? For example you can have 150 organizers tell 150 assembly members, ‘I hope that when you are making your budget in June, I hope you think about the NHAAPI communities.’ Find a common goal.

Answer by Richard: In 2016, we met with about 20 NHAAPI members to testify to communities and then drove back because we did not have the funding. The community is willing to sacrifice if you build relationships with them. Communities on the ground are the ones who know (i.e Regional Bay Area Task Force)

Answer by Priscilla: They don’t have to be mutually exclusive. There is value in getting into the practice of starting with a smaller group of going to Sacramento but a lot of it is taking that first step and starting to build that muscle. We need to learn the cultural practices of Sacramento too and we build power over time”

Answer by Chanchanit: “Remember the quote by Richard, ‘Invisibility is expensive.’ Communicate to your community that they can’t be made invisible if they want to see the change they want to see. So yah, just bring everyone there and let the powers that be, see”

Answer from Mike: Go to your district office too

Answer from Angelica: Intersectionality and capacity. We are organizing through our LGBTQ youth, our elders, our sisters. There is true utility to bring our communities to the capitol but there is also a need to bring the capitol to our communities. A systemic issue, we do not get funded at the same level as our White counterparts. Funding has to do with BIPOC capacity too”

- Question: “Why is the process to implement things hard? What now and why is implementation not happening?”

Answer from Mike: “The agencies sometimes have, well it’s not the budget, it’s the request. We have to continue to push the agencies to pass. We are having this issue with CDPH today. Unless we make our voices heard, they might not know so we have to continue to push the needle. Maybe it’s training, maybe it’s resources, people will always make excuses but let’s continue to push our needle”

Answer from Priscilla: “Implementation can be changing. Specifically to AB1726, there was no enforcement process. It was about data collection and so it’s not as explicit about reporting. There was no statutory obligation to publish and make it public. That’s a big part of what we’re fighting for because we don’t know what’s happening. CalHSS got 20 million dollars 2 years ago and we haven’t seen an implementation process. It is not written into the law, there is no statutory requirement.

CLOSING PROGRAM:

Closing Remarks: Chair Serena Chin Kirk and Isa Whalen

Recap of panels and thank you for doing the work (Remarks by Natalie Masuoka)

- This summit was pulled together in 2.5 months (shoutout Melanie, Tammy, and UCLA Asian American faculty)
- Isa Whalen, Asian American Legislative Caucus
- Senate Consultant of Asian American Legislative Caucus
- Mission of Caucus to advocate for the community, emphasize equity, and support communities to thrive
- Would not be possible without the support of the community and everyone here

Chair Serena Chin Kirk, Chair of the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs

- Grateful for caucus allies
- Hoping that everyone leaves elevated, grounded, inspired, and hopeful
- Reminder that every person in our community (i.e Toisanese grandma who was assaulted during the rise of Asian hate during COVID-19) is the reason why we continue to fight
- The work that has been done so far is something to be proud of, and also a reminder of what we can continue to do.
- “We are embodying what it means to be a good ancestor.”
 - “I picture my great-great grandfather, and his brother, who went on to lead rail worker rights and then went back to China to start a school for girls.”
- Quote: A Good Ancestor, “It’s 3:23 in the morning and I can’t sleep because my great-great grandchildren ask me, ‘What did you do when the world was ending?’”
 - We need a radical shift to long-term thinking beyond our own lifetimes, to honor our generations to come
- In our thinking around investments, policy investments, and how we show up for one another and other oppressed folks, maybe we can take the time to educate the pillars of power and accept nothing less than what our great-great grandchildren deserve. Myself and our commission stand side by side to tell the stories of our community and our Black and Brown communities around California

Award to Karthik Roma Christian (?)

- Presented by Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs and AANHPI Caucus