

Preface

The State of Asian Pacific America

With this publication, our two institutions—Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center—are proud to formally inaugurate the nation's first Asian Pacific American public policy research institute. We are hopeful that this report, like many others which we plan to release in years to come, will serve to inform public discussions and shape public policy deliberations on major issues and concerns of the nation's rapidly growing and diverse Asian Pacific American population.

We believe this policy report is particularly timely because of the extraordinary political and social changes that are occurring at all levels of our society and government. The year 1993 marks not only the inauguration of President Bill Clinton and a shift from a Republican to a Democratic administration, but also a dramatic increase in the representation of women and peoples of color from the United States Senate to local city halls. The heightened presence of Asian Pacific Americans in government and politics across the nation—from their substantial increases of new registered voters to the large numbers of leaders who have sought and have won elections—has been equally impressive and significant. The year 1993 also represents a historical crossroads for our country's domestic and international policy agendas. Every major policy issue from education to employment will likely undergo vigorous reexamination and perhaps major revamping, be it in response to how the nation should compete effectively with the rest of the world or how it should address the underlying causes of its urban unrest.

This policy report on Asian Pacific America is intended to have both an immediate and future impact and significance. We have assembled a stellar group of policy experts and leaders from across the nation who have rigorously and creatively offered insights, perspectives, and recommendations on how we should understand and respond to the extraordinary growth and diversification that the Asian Pacific American population is projected to undergo from now to the year 2020. In sharing

their specialized expertise in major policy areas like immigration and higher education, they have provided decision-makers, advocacy organizations, researchers, and the general public with practical and analytical guidance on how to address the most compelling policy challenges of Asian Pacific Americans during the decade of the 1990s and the early 21st century.

As the first of many reports and activities which will be undertaken by the LEAP Public Policy Institute and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, this publication is reflective of the special strengths and goals of the two institutions that have come together to establish this joint policy research center. Founded in 1982, LEAP is a nonprofit, community organization which has sought to develop, strengthen, and expand the leadership roles played by Asian Pacific Americans through innovative professional seminars, public workshops, and other programs. The UCLA Asian American Studies Center, established in 1969, is one of four ethnic studies centers at UCLA, and one of the nation's oldest programs in Asian American Studies. Through its research, teaching, publishing, and public educational activities in fields ranging from literature to urban planning, the faculty, staff, and students of the Center have sought to advance scholarly and policy understanding of Asian Pacific Americans.

In closing, we would like to pay special tribute to Professor Paul Ong of the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning for proposing this special policy project, and for generating the population projections of the demographic future of Asian Pacific Americans which serve as the unifying theme of this report. We also would like to express our gratitude to the Board of Directors of LEAP and the Faculty Advisory Committee of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center for supporting the establishment of our joint policy research center.

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