



National Council of Asian Pacific Americans

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Asian Americans Push Candidates on Information, Access, and Comprehensive Immigration Reform

WHAT: NCAPA news conference

WHERE: JACL, 5415 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60640

WHEN: 11 a.m., April 15, 2008

Chicago, IL, April 8 – The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) calls on presidential candidates, Congressional, state and local lawmakers to address the data, access, and immigration needs of their communities in a platform to be unveiled in Chicago on April 15, 2008.

Progress for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in all public policy areas – including civil rights, economic justice, education, health care reform, and immigration – depends on progress in information collection and presentation, equal access to programs and services regardless of English language ability, and comprehensive immigration reform that creates a path towards citizenship and keeps families together.

NCAPA advocates that data must be collected and presented for specific Asian American communities. Since 2000 the Asian American community, which now includes over 14.6 million people, has grown by over 23 percent, making it the fastest growing racial group in the country. In Chicago, Asian Americans constitute almost 5 percent of the population, and the community is rapidly growing. Accurate and readily available data focused on specific Asian American and Pacific Islander communities are the foundations upon which effective public policy must be built.

Additionally, communities must have full access to all publicly funded programs. Many face language barriers in using of essential services that are supported by the federal government, despite the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has found that these barriers constitute discrimination based on national origin and are forbidden under legislation as well as presidential executive order.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders also need comprehensive immigration reform. According to the Census Bureau, over 60 percent of Asian Americans and 4 percent of Pacific Islanders are foreign-born, compared to just over 11 percent of all people in the U.S., and the communities account for over 25 percent of the nation's foreign-born population. Real progress in civil rights, economic justice, education, and health are all tightly linked to progress in immigration reform.

Participants in the news conference will include representatives of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Asian American Institute (AAI), Korean American Resource & Cultural Center (KRCC), National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) and other local Asian American organizations.

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NCAPA, founded in 1996, is a nonpartisan coalition of 25 national organizations that represent Americans with heritage in Asia and the Pacific Islands.