



January 14, 2021

OFFICERS

John Yang, Co-chair
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Alvina Yeh, Co-chair
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Sung Yeon Choimorrow, Treasurer
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

Becky Belcore, At-Large
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium

Jeffrey Caballero, At-Large
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Asian American Psychological Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholars
Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy & Leadership
Asian Real Estate Association of America
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
BPSOS
Center for Asian American Media
Center for Asian Pacific American Women
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
Council of Korean Americans
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Japanese American Citizens League
Laotian American National Alliance
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association of Asian American Professionals*
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates Payu-ta, Inc.
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
South Asian Americans Leading Together
South Asian Bar Association of North America
South Asian Public Health Association
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

NCAPA is a project of Tides Center

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), a coalition of 37 national nonprofit organizations working to represent millions of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), congratulations on your election to serve in the 117th Congress. As you consider your legislative agenda for the term, Asian Pacific American organizations from across the country have compiled priorities for your consideration. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to engage you and share our diverse perspectives on issues that impact our community.

Who We Are

The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans is a coalition of national Asian American and Pacific Islander community organizations who work to advocate for, and to elevate the visibility of all the diverse groups within the AAPI community. Our member organizations work within the East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander American communities; and our collective networks of hundreds of affiliates and chapters span across the country and into 3 territories. Our member organizations represent over 30 different ethnic groups and work in-language in over 60 different languages.

Originally founded in 1996 as a convening body that relied on the shared staff capacity of just a few member organizations, NCAPA has evolved to support full-time staff that now help coordinate the activities and work of the coalition and its individual members. In addition to our general membership body, we are organized into five policy committees (civil rights, immigration, healthcare, education, and housing/economic justice) and a civic engagement committee, which help to organize our work, with member organizations' staff participating in the committees.

COVID-19 and the State of the AAPI Community

The Asian American and Pacific Islander community is one of the [fastest growing](#) populations in the United States and an increasingly powerful electorate. In this election cycle, AAPIs came out in [record-breaking numbers](#). With 22 million community members from over 50 ethnic groups, we are a diverse and vibrant community with complex needs that are too often overlooked. This year, our communities have faced a two-fold pandemic of COVID-19 and racism—both scapegoated for the spread of the virus and disproportionately vulnerable to its economic and health impacts.

This dual pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many inequities within our community—from Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders reporting the [highest case rates](#) of any racial/ethnic group in several states, to low-income AAPI renters facing [threats of eviction](#), to AAPI students at risk of falling behind in their education because of the [digital homework gap](#), to immigrants fearful of accessing healthcare because of the [public charge rule](#).

Many challenges facing AAPIs were here long before this public health crisis and will likely persist even after. [Decades of Islamophobia](#) have made Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian Americans targets of harassment, surveillance, and xenophobic and racist travel bans like the Muslim Ban. Hundreds of Southeast Asian American refugees and immigrants—particularly those from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam—have been [detained and deported](#) as a result of America’s war on drugs, mass incarceration, and inhumane 1996 immigration laws. The lack of [disaggregated data](#) for Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders obscures many disparities within our communities and prevents us from identifying and addressing our unique needs.

AAPI Policy Priorities for the 117th Congress

Through a collaborative process with our policy committees, NCAPA would like to share our policy priorities for the new Congress. Please note that our policy committee co-chairs come from the following NCAPA member organizations:

- Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
- South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
- Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
- Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
- Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)
- National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)

Civil Rights

1. Promote racial justice and protect human and civil rights by:

- Supporting the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act to fight against hate crimes, harassment, and discrimination of people of color, including Asian Americans.
- Supporting the NO BAN Act in order to end racial and religious profiling of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities. And otherwise by challenging islamophobia – including speaking out against hate crimes, discrimination, harassment, and incendiary political rhetoric.
- Supporting the Equality Act to protect LGBTQ Americans, especially LGBTQ people of color who experience the intersection of homophobia, transphobia, and racism.
- Challenging racial and religious profiling, generally, and support enforcement and enhancement of anti-discrimination laws.
- Ending the racial profiling and unjust prosecutions of Asian American and Asian immigrant scientists, researchers and scholars, especially those of Chinese descent who have been targets of misguided scrutiny.

2. Protect and expand voting rights through legislation to:

- Support the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to protect and expand voting rights.
- Restore the Voting Rights Act post-*Shelby*.
- Helping more to naturalize, register to vote, and cast ballots.

3. Ensure language access by:

- Addressing linguistic barriers to accessing government programs and services across all federal agencies, by including interpretation services and translation of materials, with oversight, compliance, and enforcement.

4. Improving data collection by:

- Support the 2020 Census Deadline Extension Act to ensure that census data fully count hard-to-count populations, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and that those groups receive their fair share of federal funding and political representation.
- Oversight of the Department of Commerce to ensure an accurate count of all communities through the American Community Survey & Census 2020.
- Encouraging all federal agencies to disaggregate data for better understanding of AA, NH, and PI populations.

Immigration

- 1. Provide a Path to Citizenship for Undocumented People and People with Temporary Status by:**
 - Including DACA recipients, Temporary Protective Status (TPS) holders and families stuck in H-1B status.
 - Ensuring that everyone in temporary status is granted work authorization, access to health care, advance parole, and a process to acquire residency without having to leave the United States.
 - Rejecting any efforts to tie such a pathway to expanded inadmissibility bars, such as consideration of juvenile adjudications in determining legal status or non-adjudication gang affiliated standards.

- 2. Modernize Our Family-based Immigration System & Humanitarian Programs by:**
 - Passing the Reuniting Families Act, which would preserve and modernize our longstanding tradition of family-based immigration, clear the backlogs in the family & employment-based immigration system; increase the number of family and employment-based visas per year; adjust the per country limits and remove bars to reentry and adjustment of status; eliminate discrimination facing LGBTQ families throughout U.S. immigration laws and provide work authorization for people on H-4 visas.
 - Invalidating or defunding the public charge inadmissibility rule which makes it harder for people to obtain family-based visas.

- 3. End religious discrimination in our immigration system by:**
 - Supporting the No Ban Act which would limit executive authority to suspend or restrict immigration to the United States based on religious affiliation and prohibit religious discrimination in immigration cases. The Muslim Ban and subsequent immigration bans have separated families from even visiting their loved ones in the U.S.

- 4. Strengthen & Restore our humanitarian programs by:**
 - Supporting a 110,000 refugee admission numerical floor and fully funding the Refugee and Entrant Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, and International Disaster Assistance accounts to rebuild U.S. leadership on international refugee assistance and domestic resettlement.
 - Restoring access to our asylum by repealing all Trump administration policies impacting asylum seekers.

- 5. Restore Due Process for Immigrants and End the Criminal Justice to Deportation Pipeline by:**
 - Supporting the New Way Forward Act, that would restore due process protections to immigrants, eliminate retroactive provisions of deportation laws; restore proportionality and judicial review to our immigration system; protect civil liberties by eliminating mandatory and indefinite detention of immigrants; provide immigrants with an

opportunity for second chances by decreasing the criminal justice to deportation pipeline by redefining “conviction” to exclude expunged, deferred, annulled, invalidated, withheld, or vacated judgements; ensure all detained immigrants are provided access to counsel if they are in detention or deportation proceedings; create an opportunity for previously deported immigrants and refugees to return home to the United States; establish a five-year statute of limitations for convictions that the DHS can utilize to deport an individual.

- Supporting legislation such as the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act, which would protect the civil liberties of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers by eliminating mandatory and indefinite detention.
- Supporting alternatives to detention for anyone who is not a flight risk or whose flight risk can be mitigated by an alternative to detention, including release on recognizance, community support, bond, or a formal monitoring program, regardless of available bed space; mandate noncustodial community-based alternatives to detention for vulnerable populations, including speakers of other languages who do not have interpreters available and transgender people; improve standards and oversight of immigrant detention facilities; create a cause of action so people injured through violation of detention standards can file a claim in district court; delineate procedures for detaining individuals; and eliminate the \$1,500 bond minimum.
- Supporting cuts to funding for border patrol agents, ICE agents, and immigrant detention beds. Decrease funding for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, border agents and detention beds (see detention reform above) and eliminate programs such as the 287(g) program, that burden local law enforcement agencies.
- Prohibiting any profiling based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity in immigration enforcement.
- Opposing proposals that promote border security and interior enforcement-only approaches.

6. Support Naturalization and Integration of Immigrants by:

- Promoting Access to Citizenship and Integration of AAPI Immigrants by ensuring that naturalization is accessible and affordable for all and that fee waivers are generously applied. Promoting citizenship also means ensuring that naturalization tests are fair, and immigrant integration resources are adequately provided for community-based organizations that provide direct services such as English, civics, and naturalization courses, to individuals. Support bills that decrease barriers to naturalization and support English language acquisition, civics education, voter registration and basic education programs, such as the New Deal for New Americans Act.
- Promoting immigrant and refugee wellbeing by providing equal access to government services and public benefits programs for all immigrants and citizens, regardless of status or arrival date, including but not limited to Medicare, Medicaid & CHIP, the ACA exchange, SNAP, HUD public housing/Section 8 housing, and FAFSA; support a long-term legislative

solution to ensure that elderly and disabled refugees are not automatically cut off of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) after seven years if they face barriers to naturalization.

- Protecting workers rights by ensuring that immigrant workers have the right to organize and collectively bargain without fear of retaliation and support efforts to allow workers on H-1B visas greater ability to change employers, jobs, or positions without losing their immigration status and provide a longer grace period against laid-off H-1B workers to find replacement jobs or make arrangements prior to leaving.

Healthcare

1. Address the harmful health impact of COVID-19 on AA and NHPI communities by passing a COVID-19 relief package that:

- Ensures treatment and vaccine coverage at no cost for all persons regardless of immigration status, by incorporating the Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act (H.R. 6437/S. 3609).
- Provides sufficient fiscal relief for state and local governments in jeopardy of cutting health programs because of budget deficits due to the pandemic.
- Provides Community Health Centers \$10.77 billion in emergency funding and \$2.73 billion for vaccine activities so that health centers have immediate access to resources to serve their low-income and community of color patients. Community Health Centers should be prioritized distributors of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Supports non-profit, faith- and community-based organizations providing culturally and linguistically appropriate COVID-19-related services to low-income and communities of color by incorporating the COVID Community Care Act (H.R. 8192/S. 4941)
- Requires robust data disaggregation for racial/ethnic communities, especially AA and NHPI communities by incorporating the Equitable Data Collection and Disclosure on COVID-19 Act (H.R. 6585)
- Ensures access to translated COVID-19 related materials for all communities by incorporating the Coronavirus Language Access Act (H.R. 6623/S. 4526).

2. Advance health equity and improve the health of racial and ethnic minorities by:

- Passing legislation such as HEAL for Immigrant Women and Families Act (H.R. 4701/S. 3799), Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA) (H.R. 6637/S. 4819), and the EACH Woman Act (H.R. 1692/S. 758) to improve access to care and remove barriers that make it difficult or impossible for AA and NHPI communities, and immigrant families generally, to seek the care they need. The COVID-19 pandemic shed light on longstanding health disparities affecting AA and NHPI communities.
- Strengthening the Affordable Care Act and undo harmful actions by the Trump Administration that undermined the law. We encourage you to support adequate funding for the CDC's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) programs and all Offices of Minority Health.

- Eliminating all immigration-based restrictions on health care. We encourage you to enable immigrants to access health benefits programs by removing the five-year bar on Medicaid and ensure that use of public benefits programs does not jeopardize immigration status through public charge.
- Supporting behavioral and mental health agencies that predominantly serve AA and NHPI communities, and other communities of color, and developing a national outreach and education strategies to reduce stigma and ensure individuals at risk receive the care they need.
- Providing parity in health care access for residents of the U.S. territories. Congress should fully extend Medicaid and other federal health programs to the residents of the U.S. territories by supporting the Territories Health Equity Act (H.R. 1354/S. 1773) and the Insular Area Medicaid Parity Act (H.R. 6495).
- Supporting President-elect Biden's commitment to double the Health Center Program. Community health centers (CHCs) are critical health providers for AA and NHPI communities that provide care in-language care that is culturally appropriate.

3. Address health disparities among AA and NHPI communities by:

- Supporting program and research on chronic conditions and diseases that disproportionately affect AAs and NHPs, including hepatitis B, diabetes, cancer, and obesity. Congress should recognize the unique health disparities affecting AA and NHPI communities and ensure adequate funding for research, education, and intervention to improve the health status of our communities.
- Congress should support universal hepatitis B vaccination and pass legislation that addresses instances of institutional discrimination, including discriminatory DOD policies against those living with chronic hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS.
- Supporting legislation such as South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act (H.R. 3131), LIVER Act (H.R. 3016/S. 3074), Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (H.R. 1503/S. 595), and Stop Mental Health Stigma in Our Communities Act (H.R. 2826).

4. Strengthen and reauthorize the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act by:

- Strengthening and reauthorizing through FY 2029 to improve access to health care services and community programming, Native Hawaiians in health care professions, and traditional healing practices. Native Hawaiians experience disparate rates of death and illness. While numbers related to the health of Native Hawaiians are improving, this community continues to suffer from high mortality rates and significantly higher rates for chronic diseases compared to other groups nationally. Native Hawaiians have higher prevalence of obesity, high blood pressure, depression, adolescent suicide and other risky behaviors. Other social factors that impact Hawaiian health and well-being include high rates of incarceration, public assistance, unemployment, and low educational achievement.

Education

1. **Support full funding for education programs that support and expand the educational opportunities for AAPI Students by:**
 - **Funding K-12 Programs** including but not limited to: Title I (supports for historically underfunded schools that serve low-income students), Title II (grants to local and state educational agencies for educator professional development), Title III (state grants to support English Learners), Title IV (after school and summer learning programs), Title VI (Native Hawaiian Education Program).
 - **Funding Higher Education Programs** including but not limited to: Title IV (Federal TRIO Programs, GEAR UP, AANAPISI), Pell Grants, Perkins CTE, and work study.
 - **Funding Adult Education Programs** including but not limited to: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

2. **Reinforcing implementation of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) so that states uphold the intent of the law to ensure equity through:**
 - **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ensure meaningful outreach and engagement of all education stakeholders, including parents and educators, when it comes to important school decisions including but not limited to assessments, accountability measures, discipline, school closure and restructuring, supports of special student populations, etc.
 - **Improving School Climate:** Enforce federal law that ensures all students to feel safe regardless of ethnicity, immigration status, gender or sexuality, language ability, and other protected classifications. Ensure school officials are knowledgeable and able to reinforce federal civil rights protections of students.
 - **Data Accessibility:** Promote access to meaningful data on our communities that is accessible to community stakeholders. For example, incentivizing institutions to disaggregate data on education outcomes and enrollment for AAPI subgroups, using the decennial Census categories, at minimum, but including additional AAPI populations that reflect the local and state context. Also, ensuring technical assistance to local education agencies and state education agencies to cross tabulate student data as required by law.
 - **Data Protection:** Protect against misuse of data that could result in removal of students and families from an educational setting and/or the U.S.
 - **Advancing Public Education:** Ensure that there are adequate regulations that promote and advance public education for all students.

3. **Permanently authorize funding of minority-serving institutions**
 - And ensure robust funding of AANAPISIs to meet the needs of AAPIs, the ethnic group with the fastest growth rate.

4. **Reauthorize Higher Education Act in a comprehensive package, particularly to take into account the priorities of AAPI students and families by:**

- **Strengthening Institutions that Support our Most Underserved Students and Communities:** by fully funding for Minority Serving Institutions that support our community each fiscal year: 1) fund Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions at \$32 million and 2) fund AANAPISIs at \$30 million. Allow Minority Serving Institutions with dual designations to access federal grants to appropriately serve each community of students for which they have designation.
- **Increasing College Access to the country's most marginalized, underserved students:** Increase funding for college preparation programs that assist low-income students and students of color to gain access to higher education opportunities. Require federally funded institutions to allow undocumented students to enroll with tuition prices that reflect state resident rates.
- **Improving College Affordability:** Expand eligibility for federal financial aid to include non-traditional, part-time, formerly incarcerated, and undocumented students. Increase the maximum award for Pell Grants and index Pell to the inflation rate.
- **Supporting College Attainment:** Require the collection and reporting of data at the institution level so that students and families can assess an institution and institutions and policymakers have better information about how to best support diverse students in higher education. Incentivize institutional support for non-academic services that support non-traditional and part-time students to persist in degree attainment.
- **Providing Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Access to Federal Financial Aid:** Translate the FAFSA and other supporting documents into the top ten languages spoken by English learners in U.S. public schools. Fund youth and family centered programming that engages diverse stakeholders on the topics of college access and affordability, financial aid, and post-secondary financing options.
- **Strengthening Data Access and Transparency:** Disaggregate information in IPEDS or any succeeding postsecondary student data system by the categories of the decennial Census and American Community Survey. Incentivize institutions to disaggregate data on education outcomes and enrollment for Asian American & Pacific Islander subgroups beyond the decennial Census categories to include additional AAPI populations that reflect the local and state context. Improve public accessibility to data collected on student outcomes, including access to cross-tabulated data that would shine a light on equity issues within the institution.
- **Enforcing Civil Rights Protections:** Provide stronger guidance and clear regulations on sexual assault and transgender students. Expand non-discrimination policies to include admissions, employment, educational programs, athletics, student health insurance coverage, and gender-inclusive facilities.

Housing and Economic Justice

1. **Support funding and protections for policies that support expanding access to homeownership and housing finance through:**

- Mortgage forgiveness programs for homeowners who have lost work during the pandemic.
- Direct support for nonprofit affordable housing owners to mitigate their loss of rental income and their increased expenses (e.g., increased cleaning costs, increased hazard pay for frontline workers) during the pandemic.
- Linguistically and culturally appropriate homeownership assistance and counseling programs delivered by community organizations that assist potential and current homeowners in navigating mortgage transactions.
- Defending the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau so that it can continue enforcing strong consumer protections, ensuring the availability of fair and sustainable mortgages and other consumer products.
- Enacting positive and equitable reform of Government Sponsored Entities (GSE) to ensure the availability of affordable and sustainable mortgage products to all qualified home buyers and owners.
- Continued expansion of collecting disaggregated data on AAPIs on mortgage originations, successful loan modifications, refinances, principal reductions, short sales, and other foreclosure prevention efforts.

2. Support funding and protections for policies that support expanding access to affordable housing through:

- Enacting a new, clean eviction moratorium that does not require affirmative action by tenants to receive coverage.
- Supporting linguistically and culturally appropriate housing counseling programs delivered by community organizations that address fair housing, tenant's rights, homeless/displacement counseling, and rental search and assistance.
- Developing tenant protection legislation including Just Cause eviction, national Right to Counsel, and other anti-eviction legislation.
- Expanding of Section 8 and other forms of affordable housing for those more vulnerable
- Providing additional funding in Emergency rent relief to all tenants, regardless of immigration status.
- Issuing separate relief funding for those who are already experiencing homelessness.
- Expanding and enforcing tenant protections for renters in hot markets.
- The full and immediate capitalization of the National Housing Trust Fund that will generate resources for the production, rehabilitation and preservation of rental homes that are affordable for extremely and very low-income households.
- Funding federal programs such as: the HOME Investment Partnership, Community Development Block Grant, Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant, Section 202 elderly housing, public housing, and housing vouchers programs.
- Restoring Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing with renewed emphasis on facilitating investments in preserving historic ethnic neighborhoods.

3. Support small business and access to capital through:

- Ensuring all COVID-19 relief programs are translated into AAPI and other languages for Limited English Proficient (LEP) communities.
- Creating incentives for commercial real estate owners to not displace AA and NHPI small businesses that have been forced to close due to COVID-19.
- Recognizing the importance of community-based organizations (CBOs) – invest in capacity building of local organizations.
- Increasing federal funding and eligibility of United States Pacific Island territories for economic development programs to better serve AA & NHPIs, including the Community Services Block Grants, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) fund, Small Business Association's (SBA) Microloan Program, 7(a) and 504 guaranteed loan programs, Social Services Block Grants, the Office of Community Services' Economic Discretionary grants, the Job Opportunities for Low Income Individuals program, and the Workforce Investment Act program. Establishing a set-aside within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Native Americans program to support the impact of the federal government's plan to place 4,000 marines in Guam on the cultural, social and economic well-being of the Chamorro peoples.
- Strengthening AAPI participation in public minority contracting programs like the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program and build a record of evidence that accurately depicts AA & NHPI participation in these programs and include technical assistance resources and other improvements to increase the economic and small business success of eligible AA & NHPI organizations.
- Supporting increased federal funding for programs that support minority entrepreneurs, including the Minority Business Development Agency at the United States Department of Commerce and the SBA's PRIME, Microloan and Women's Business Centers programs.
- Supporting access to capital for alternative financing entities such as community development corporations (CDCs), CDFIs, credit unions, and nonprofit loan funds to invest in small business and social ventures.
- Supporting rural development and outreach programs that will assist AA & NHPIs enter the farming industry, including the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, Value-Added Producer Grants, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts, and the Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

4. Strengthening and expanding protections in employment by:

- Extending benefits and expanding coverage for unemployment insurance, including fully funding state unemployment systems.
- Addressing discrimination in the workplace, including harassment based on sex, race, national origin, religion, age, and disability; prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; protecting older workers and pregnant workers against discrimination; and protecting women and people of color against pay discrimination.

- Passing legislation that reflects the needs of the current and future workforce, including raising the minimum wage and expanding access to overtime pay, guaranteeing workers' right to organize, and addressing work and family obligations, including providing paid family and medical leave for workers, access to paid sick days, and fair and predictable schedules.

Tech and Telecommunications

1. Provide protections for personal data by:

- Establishing comprehensive federal consumer privacy legislation that requires companies to: 1) provide users with reasonable access to a method of opt-out of information and data-sharing, 2) accessible explanations of how information will be used, 3) prohibit use of data other than for the explicit purpose and agreements under which permissions were obtained, 4) obtain opt-in consent prior to collecting or disclosing sensitive data, 5) enable users to request, update, change, dispute the accuracy of, or remove their personal information without penalty or discrimination, 5) disclose information to government entities only after an appropriate judicial process, 6) prohibit discriminatory uses of personal data, 7) provide for algorithmic transparency and fairness in automated decisions.
- Providing resources, materials, and choices in users' preferred languages to make their consent more informed and meaningful. Access to policies, notifications, opt-in requests and opt-out opportunities, and all other notices related to an individual's digital rights should be made available in-language, so all users can easily understand and access controls they are entitled to.
 - Invasive data collection practices gather personal, financial, political, demographic, location, online tracking, health and biometric information that is often monetized at the expense of consumer privacy or used to discriminate against users. Members of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities who are limited English proficient are particularly vulnerable to data breaches and related civil rights violations.

2. Fund digital literacy training programs by:

- Supporting legislation such as Digital Equity Act, S.1167, which would support Asian American populations that have low levels of digital literacy and/or lower English proficiency rates and ensure communities are protected from online and other digital threats.

3. Support universal broadband access by:

- Extending Lifeline COVID-19 waivers for the duration of the pandemic.
- Upgrading the Lifeline program to provide low-income households with comparable broadband service to non-low-income households, including the coverage of devices and an adequate benefit amount.

- Increasing annual Congressional appropriations to support a \$50 broadband benefit for Lifeline households that can help to bridge the digital divide negatively impacting low-income Asian American and Pacific Islander populations.

4. Address racial profiling and algorithmic bias in the federal use of facial recognition and other biometric surveillance tools by:

- Investigating the use of surveillance tools to discriminate against and endanger Black, Latinx, South Asian, Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, immigrant, low-income, homeless, and other minority and vulnerable communities.
- Passing legislation that regulates the use of facial recognition in different settings like commercial, law enforcement, and immigration contexts.
- Guaranteeing strong civil rights and civil liberties protections, as well as mechanisms like regular audits to promote transparency, accountability, and equity.
- Addressing privacy and security harms and risks in the collection of surveillance data.

Conclusion

During these times of unprecedented difficulty, these priorities for the Asian American Pacific Islander community are not only critical for immediate relief, but also for a timely recovery to begin building a more just America where AAPIs and all communities of color can succeed and thrive. The diversity of the AAPI community, while a source of strength and vibrancy, also presents challenges when considering policy solutions. Therefore, the federal government cannot assume a one-size-fits-all approach when considering the AAPI community, and as such, it must recognize that the challenges we face can vary greatly.

We appreciate the opportunity to share the perspectives of the AAPI community with you as you shape your legislative agenda. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact NCAPA National Director, Gregg Orton at gregg@ncapaonline.org. Thank you for your consideration and we welcome opportunities to work together in the new Congress.

Sincerely,

Gregg Orton
National Director