NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

NCAPA

Shifting Policies, Lasting Impacts:

# A 100-Day Review for AANHPI Communities

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# NCAPA Membership

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA)

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)

AAPI Data

Asian American Scholars Forum (AASF)

Asian and Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE)

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)

Asian Pacific American Public Affairs Association (APAPA)

Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHiP)

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV)

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy & Leadership (APPEAL)

Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA)

Act To Change

Boat People SOS (BPSOS)

Center for Asian American Media (CAAM)

Center for Asian Pacific American Women (CAPAW)

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA)

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Filipino Young Leaders Program (FYLPRO)

Hindus for Human Rights

Hmong National Development (HND)

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

Laotian American National Alliance (LANA)

Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP)

National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP)

National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA)

National Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (National ACE)

National Asian Pacific American Families Allied for Substance Awareness & Harm Reduction (NAPAFASA)

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)

National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)

National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)

National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF)

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)

OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA)

Papa Ola Lokahi

South Asian Public Health Association (SAPHA)

Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)

Sikh Coalition

Stop AAPI Hate

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance (UTOPIA-WA)

# Introduction

During the first 100 days of the second Trump Administration, amidst the flurry of Executive actions, the experiences and needs of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) continue to be obscured. The sheer scale and scope of President Trump's actions are staggering. However, the impact of his agenda has been devastating for countless community members.

The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)'s mission is to uplift our communities at the federal level through policy analysis, advocacy, and community education. We engage in collaborative and coordinated action among our collective of 44 national organizations that represent diverse interests and experiences across East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. This report aims to educate and highlight the impact of various Trump Administration actions on AANHPI communities across policy areas from health and housing, to education and civil rights.

Our goal is to strike a balance between being as detailed as possible to ensure accuracy, while also making the report accessible to organization leaders and staff as well as our broader community. We believe that it is important to combine the lived expertise of community members and community-serving organizations with the research expertise of policy organizations. This report seeks to combine, in an efficient and effective manner, the following:

① An overview and policy analysis of major Executive actions since January 2025;

② Survey data relevant to our communities on various issues;

③ Community perspectives on how organizations and people are being impacted by the current context and political landscape.

Understanding how these policies directly affect families, jobs, immigration status, and civil rights empowers AANHPI communities to advocate for themselves and protect what matters most. Stop AAPI Hate's most recent report suggests that about half of our community were unfamiliar with a number of policy proposals made by the Trump Administration.[1] When people are informed, they are more likely to organize around the issues that impact them and speak out. Awareness of the implications of major policy shifts is a crucial step in building long-term power and resilience for the AANHPI advocacy community.

**We call on the policymakers and the media to center the voices of everyday AANHPI community members – our neighbors, families, and advocates – who are fighting every day for a better future.** Our stories, struggles, and calls to action deserve to be heard and drive policy solutions. It is time for those in power, duly elected by us, to show political courage by listening, responding to, and working with us.

**We urge philanthropic partners to deepen their investment in AANHPI communities, especially in the face of unprecedented attacks on racial equity work.** Our work ahead is urgent and already under-resourced, and amidst funding freezes, cuts, and priority changes, many organizations are struggling to find their path forward on even financial footing. Now more than ever, we need bold, sustained financial support to build power, protect our communities, and advance towards equity that we all deserve. We look to those who will stand with us, not just in moments of crisis, but in the long, everyday work of change.

**We hope that this report will spur meaningful dialogue and raise community awareness and welcome the opportunity to engage with government and elected leaders across the government to ensure our communities are accounted for and represented.**

# AANHPI Visibility

NCAPA believes that everyone deserves the freedom to be themselves and access to equal opportunity, no matter what we look like, where we came from, or how we pray. The Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community is very diverse and is the fastest growing demographic group in the United States, with over 50+ ethnicities and 100+ languages represented in communities across the country. [1]

In February 2025, NCAPA joined over 20 civil and human rights organizations representing over 100 million Americans in reaffirming to Congressional leaders our commitment to protecting diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensuring equal opportunity for all:

> "AMERICA'S STRENGTH AND LEADERSHIP IN AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE AND COMPETITIVE WORLD DEPENDS ON OUR ABILITY TO BE AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY. AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST ECONOMY, AMERICA'S SUCCESS MEANS ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE, UNLOCKING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF OUR DIVERSE TALENT AND PERSPECTIVES TO DRIVE PROGRESS WELL INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICIES AIM TO ELIMINATE RECOGNIZED DISADVANTAGES, NOT CREATE THEM. HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT WITHOUT CLEAR AND SPECIFIC GUIDELINES THAT ENCOURAGE THESE CORE VALUES, INSTITUTIONS CONTINUE DISCRIMINATORY AND EXCLUSIONARY PATTERNS THAT HOLD US ALL BACK." [2]

## Attacks on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Since taking office, the Trump Administration has made clear that one of their primary objectives is to rollback progress made through efforts to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this section, a number of executive actions will be highlighted that have left America less open to diversity, have deepened structural inequities, all while sending a clear message that not everyone should be included in the American Dream.

AANHPIs have played a significant role in contributing to American history. The erasure of a community's history is a concrete step towards taking away their power and voice. While we believe much of our community's progress has been a result of America's still-incomplete reckoning with race and the slow process of embracing diversity, our community's perspective is shifting over time. Nonetheless, our experiences and stories deserve to be seen and heard.

**A majority of Asian workers still view diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the workplace as positive (57%). [3] It is clear that a strong majority of AAPIs (64%) disapprove of President Trump's handling of diversity and inclusion policies with 2/3s of AAPIs opposing federal cuts to diversity and equity programs.[4]**

We will highlight later in this report how diversity, equity, and inclusion in other contexts is still important to our communities.

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Executive Order 14151: *"Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing"*<br>• Executive Order 14173: *"Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity,"* which rescinds a 60-year-old order (Executive Order 11246) that prohibited discrimination by federal contractors<br>• Banning the use of words related to "diversity, equity and inclusion." | Eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion programs ends important policies and programs that provide opportunities for AANHPIs, from access to education, good jobs, healthcare, and housing.<br><br>Furthermore, banning the use of words that align with the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion is censorship unbecoming of a democratic nation. This attempt to silence and control speech should be a massive warning sign for U.S. communities.<br><br>Finally, the Trump Administration's attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion have created a massive chilling effect on existing policies in the private sector as well. Numerous companies are rolling back initiatives aimed at providing opportunities for underrepresented workers out of fear of targeting and reprisal by the government.<br><br>The end result of these attacks will be less opportunity for communities of color, including AANHPIs. |

## CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP AT WORK

For over 42 years, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) has been working to professionally empower AANHPIs through leadership, empowerment, and policy. Today in the workplace, despite steady and rapid Asian and Pacific Islander population growth, LEAP's research indicates AANHPIs continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles across work sectors.

By offering culturally relevant professional development LEAP works to widen pathways to opportunity and help individuals overcome challenges and roadblocks, with the belief that no matter who we are or where we come from, everyone deserves the freedom and opportunity to succeed. LEAP cultivates a robust pipeline of leaders by encouraging individuals to assume leadership positions at work through professional development training, consulting, and connecting AANHPIs across an extensive network of alumni spanning across different work sectors.

Over the years, LEAP has provided support to over 150,000 people across the nation through over 2,700 workshops across all sectors, including colleges and universities, community and student organizations, federal and state government agencies, and Fortune 1000 companies. Continuing this work to cultivate leadership and empower AANHPI professionals helps everyone have an equal opportunity for success.

A LEAP Cohort celebrates the completion of their program

Executive Director Linda Akutagawa speaks at an event

## Erasure of History

There are over 25 million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) in the United States, representing over 7% of the American population.[5] Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States have a rich and varied cultural history. Stories of perseverance, exclusion, activism, and overcoming racism are integral to the cultural fabric of this nation and the foundation of resiliency of our community. Celebrating diversity and our different ethnic groups helps us find common ground across our differences as a nation.

The erasure of history is an important step in undermining community power. By purposefully ignoring our complicated past and the historic barriers to success the AANHPI community has faced in the workplace, in schools, and in society, the Trump Administration is destroying the conditions for everyone to achieve success and thrive. This is why it is critical to ensure that our histories and historic records are preserved.

**7 IN 10 AANHPIS** support teaching historical topics such as slavery, racism, segregation, and AANHPI history.

**64%** of AAPI adults oppose the elimination of federal funding to K-12 schools that teach about the ongoing impact of slavery and racism in America.[6]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) funding and personnel cuts to National Park Service (NPS) and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.<br><br>• Trump Administration deleting or manipulating historic records and facts across federal websites. | Such cuts will also directly impact national historic sites under the NPS that are among those where over 125,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were unjustly incarcerated during WWII.<br><br>While some content has been found to have been restored, the continued removal and editing of historical records will require constant monitoring to further ensure erasures of our shared history do not take place.<br><br>AANHPIs have played a significant role in contributing to American history. The immigration stories of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, and the histories of their countries of origin deserve to be seen and recognized. Ensuring the continued preservation and documentation of AANHPI histories, cultures, and languages humanizes our communities. By recognizing our complicated past and the historic barriers to opportunity and success that members of the AANHPI community have faced in the workplace, in schools, and in society, we can work to address and improve the conditions for everyone to achieve success and thrive. This is why it is critical to ensure that our histories and historic records are preserved. |

## Language Access

Many AANHPIs face significant language barriers when accessing support in critical areas such as in health, education, housing, immigration, voting, and during natural disasters–with minimal to no access to information or direct support in their spoken language. An estimated 32% of Asian Americans are considered to have limited English proficiency (LEP).[7] The most frequently spoken languages among U.S. residents with limited English proficiency within our AANHPI communities include the following: Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi, Nepali, Khmer, Hmong[8] and Fijian, Marshallese, Tongan, and Samoan.[9]

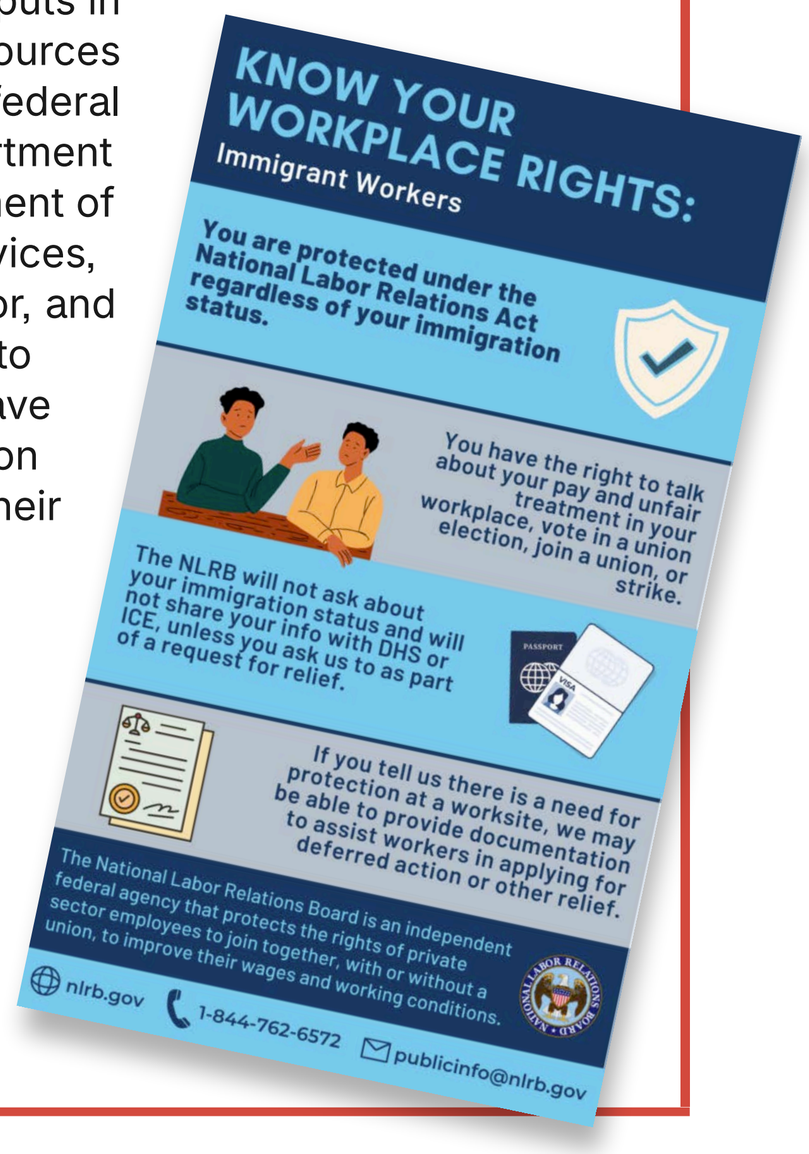
Barriers to language access can prevent individuals and families from receiving essential services that help to improve their lives. Equitable access to government programs and systems is critical so that individuals in the United States are provided with the same treatment under established law.

On March 1, President Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14224, "*Designating English as the official language of the United States*," while revoking a 25-year-old policy that required all federal agencies to take certain actions to ensure that programs and activities were accessible to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. EO 14224 rescinds guidance connected to EO 13166, which has been the foundation for proactive efforts across the federal government to create "meaningful access" for diverse, LEP populations, and directs the Attorney General to issue updated guidance.

**Members of the community should continue to seek language access assistance as it is their right. Federal laws still exist that require compliance from direct service providers. Civil rights protections such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, and Section 616 of the Stafford Act and other regulations ensure that civil rights protections for language assistance remain and must continue.**

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Executive Order 14224: *"Designating English as the Official Language of the United States"* | AANHPI communities will likely lose critical language access protections. Such actions will negatively impact the scope and reach of vital information and services, limiting AANHPI families' ability to navigate the federal government. For example, it has already been reported that at least 10 federal contracts related to language access have already been rescinded.<br><br>This may lead to much needed federal financial assistance being taken from community based organizations and agencies that directly serve and meet the needs of AANHPIs. This includes, but is not limited, to:<br>• A reduction in the lack of available interpreters and translators in ACA/marketplace enrollment<br>• Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) requirements for community health centers<br>• Housing counseling agencies |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | • Consumer protection programs<br>• Access to ballot language assistance<br>• Disaster preparedness efforts and recovery<br><br>Additionally, this order puts in jeopardy additional resources historically created by federal agencies like the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and others, that are critical to ensuring that people have access to the information they need to exercise their rights, and ensure their safety and wellbeing. |



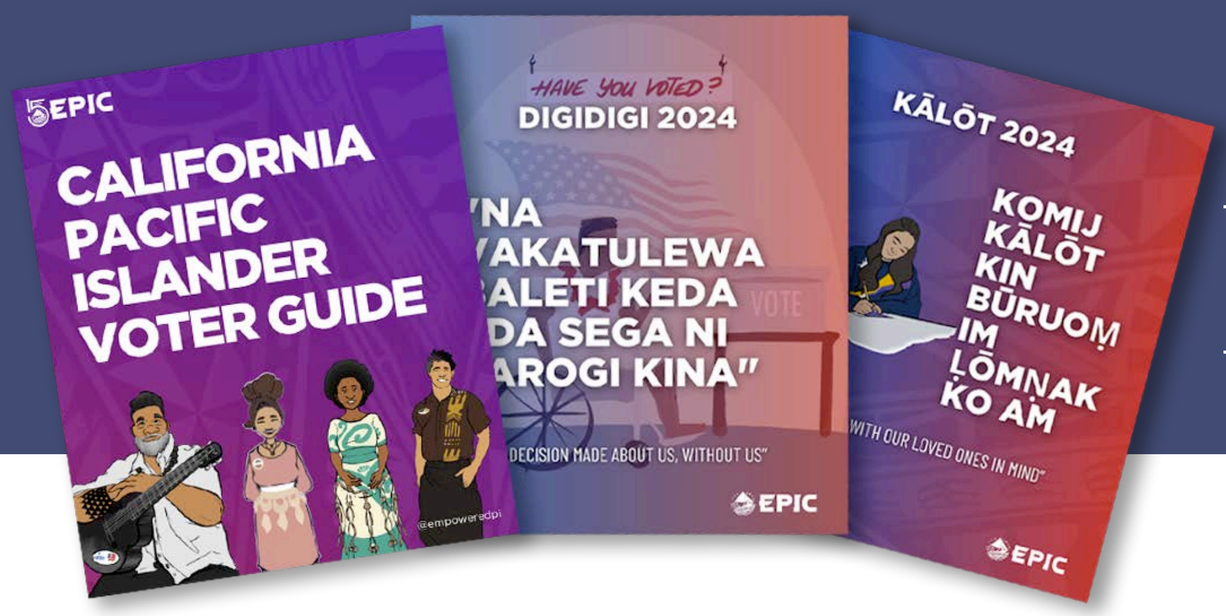
## LANGUAGE ACCESS AND VOTING: BUILDING POWER FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

For Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities, language is more than just a means of communication. It's deeply rooted in culture, identity, and is a celebration of the essence of being NHPI. However, there are still significant language access needs within the community, and the lack of in-language and culturally competent resources continue to be difficult when accessing critical services such as healthcare, understanding rights, and being civically engaged. Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC), believes that language access is essential to keeping NHPI communities informed and better understanding what's available to them.

California is home to one of the largest and fastest growing NHPI communities. In 2024, EPIC worked to make civic participation more accessible by creating a voter guide and social media toolkit available in several Pacific Islander languages, including Fijian, Marshallese, Samoan, and Tongan, which also are limited English proficient (LEP) communities. For many families, this marked the first time they received voting information in a language they know and an opportunity for them to fully understand how to make an informed decision in the democratic process. When they see information in their languages, they see themselves and are more likely to be civically engaged.

Language access requires work beyond voter outreach and education. This year, EPIC continues their advocacy work at the state level in California by supporting legislation such as AB 1242, which strengthens language access for health and human services, and AB 863, which ensures eviction notices are translated for tenants with limited English proficiency. They've also supported AB 865 to fund instructional materials for Dual Language Immersion programs and joined a letter urging investment in language access for multilingual learners across California.

Language access builds power and it affirms peoples' culture, identity, and humanity. Language justice is foundational to equity, and EPIC will continue to fight for a future where all communities, no matter the language they speak, can thrive and participate fully.




EPIC Voter Guides available in English, Fijian, Marshallese

## COMBATING MISINFORMATION IN VIETNAMESE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Over half of Vietnamese Americans speak English less than very well.[10] When it comes to news consumption, many turn to Vietnamese-language content on platforms like YouTube and social media, where fact-checking is often lacking—allowing misinformation to spread quickly in these communities.

Viet Fact Check (VFC) addresses this issue by providing fact-checked, source-verified analysis in both English and Vietnamese. By providing fact-based information in-language, VFC helps Vietnamese Americans, regardless of what language they speak, stay informed and up to date on key issues. To date, they have published over 300 bilingual articles.

In March of 2024, VFC launched Sharing Stories, Sharing Trust, a series of in-person workshops in partnership with colleagues in academia, traditional journalism, and community organizers. These workshops create intentional space for sharing trustworthy information through storytelling, translation, and thoughtful social media engagement. More than media literacy, SSST fosters ongoing dialogue across cultural and generational lines to build collective understanding and reduce polarization through misinformation prevention, delivered within a culturally relevant framework.

VFC has hosted over 60 bilingual workshops across five states, reaching hundreds of elders, students, and community leaders. The workshops are now expanding to Korean- and Spanish-speaking communities, with VFC equipping partner organizations with the tools and methodology to adapt the program to their own audiences. The success of Viet Fact Check's work underscores the power of meeting individuals where they are in the languages they speak to share accurate information and build digital literacy.

Fliers for VFC's Bilingual Media Literacy Workshops

Vietnamese community members attend a misinformation workshop

## Elimination of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)

On Day 1 of President Trump's 2nd administration, the rescission of Executive Order 13985, "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities" and Executive Order 14031 "Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders," dismantled and removed important policies, initiatives, and investments that strengthened representation and opportunities for AANHPIs across the government. Through these rollbacks, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI) which has existed for over 25 years and under both Republican and Democratic administrations, was eliminated. Additionally, the President's Advisory Commission, a federal committee established to advise the President on ways for public, private, and non-profit partnerships to collaborate on advancing equity, justice, and opportunity for all AANHPI communities was also disbanded. **AANHPI communities overwhelmingly oppose eliminating WHIAANHPI and initiatives that seek to broaden access to federal resources, policies, and programs for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (66%).**[11]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions | **Eliminating WHIAANHPI means:**<br><br>Losing coordinated interagency policy making, program development, and community outreach aimed at eliminating existing barriers that many AANHPI communities face.<br><br>Ending a critical point of access and voice within and across the federal government to combat anti-Asian hate, expand data disaggregation, improve language access and in other areas impact the everyday lives of AANHPIs. Some examples of WHIAANHPI's vital work during its time included: |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| • Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions | • The coordinated collection and distribution of 32 federal agency action plans reflecting the needs of the community. Agencies included the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, and others.<br><br>• Managing a Regional Network of 450 federal officials in 10 federal regions representing more than 40 federal agencies to connect local AANHPI communities with federal resources.<br><br>• Organizing and facilitating community-centered and policy-driven convenings across all 10 federal regions, over 25 states, in DC, and the Pacific Islands including hosting listening sessions, roundtables, and summits. Most recent examples include:<br>  ▪ 2023: Mental health - WHIAANHPI convened federal officials, mental health professionals, researchers, and community leaders to discuss how to transform mental healthcare by prioritizing the need for culturally competent and accessible care.<br>  ▪ 2024: Higher education - WHIAANHPI brought together education leaders, faculty, administrators, staff, and students from across the country to discuss challenges and best practices taking place at AANAPISIs and NHSIs.<br><br>Without such representation within and across the federal government, AANHPI interests will not receive the same prioritization or level of interest it has in the past. We must work together to ensure that we continue to call out the harms of this Administration on our communities. |

## WHIAANHPI'S COMMUNITY IMPACT

In Fall 2024, The National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA) was one of three awardees of WHIAANHPI's inaugural Combating Hate and Promoting Healthy Communities Innovator Challenge. This effort by the Initiative was started to support 501(c)3 community-based organizations working to raise awareness of hate crimes and address health consequences.

With the award, NAAPIMHA will be launching a National AANHPI Community of Practice (CoP) for Radical Healing & Community Care program to convene AANHPI leaders to train, share best practices, develop new resources, and respond to future mass community traumas, bullying, hate incidents, or bias impacting our communities. NAAPIMHA seeks to address the rapidly growing mental health needs within AANHPI communities, given the rise of anti-AANHPI violence, the existing mental health crises, and the unexpected disasters and trauma occurring in communities, such as instances of gun violence and natural disasters.

**NAAPIMHA staff accepts WHIAANHPI Award**

Photo Credit to Annette Lee for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)

## Elimination of Data Driven Policies

Good data is necessary to make good policy. When our government fails to accurately count Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders, it becomes more difficult for us to advocate for what our communities needs are, including federal resources that directly help individuals and families. The lack of available, accurate data fails to provide a clear picture of who we are and our challenges across health, housing, education and other areas.

When community data is lumped together and fails to reflect the complexity and differences in our lived experiences, our communities continue to remain underrepresented, under-resourced, and underserved. Data disaggregation is important for AANHPI populations because it further illuminates and addresses the gaps that continue to impact the socioeconomic conditions of individuals, families, and communities more broadly. Often viewed as homogenous, these communities include more than 50 detailed subgroups that can differ dramatically across key social and economic indicators.

The President's revocation of EO 13985 "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government" rolls back previous efforts made in the areas of data disaggregation on race and ethnicity.

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| • Rescinding Executive Order 13985: *"Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government"*<br><br>The Administration has also taken additional actions to:<br>• Delete federal datasets across the government to roll back disaggregated data.<br>• Disband key advisory committees at the Census Bureau.<br>• Reduce the Census Bureau through federal workforce cuts and cuts to programing and hiring for an effective 2030 Census. | The rescission effectively disbands the Federal Equitable Data Working Group that consisted of the U.S. Chief Statistician and federal officials; halting efforts to promote data equity.<br><br>The working group worked in consultation with federal agencies and community stakeholders to study and provide recommendations related to the existing gaps in federal data collection across programs, policies, and strategies. Following the Trump Administration's decision, these previous efforts to improve and implement data collection on race and ethnicity remain uncertain.<br><br>The National Advisory Committee and Census Advisory Committee each played a pivotal role in collecting public input inclusive of varying perspectives regarding the Census. Federal hiring freezes could lead to disruptions in the work or preparing for the 2030 Census.<br><br>Overall, decades of work together by stakeholders and the federal government intended to better understand and make the AANHPI community more visible has been dismantled. |

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:
# ADVOCATING FOR ACCURATE DATA

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) is the nation's oldest Sikh American civil rights organization, focused on building leadership and capacity in the Sikh American community. SALDEF advocates for the disaggregation of federal data to better represent the diverse experiences of ethnic subgroups within South Asian communities, particularly Sikhs.

The current lack of detailed, ethnic group-specific data prevents a clear understanding of the challenges Sikhs face, including caste-based discrimination, restrictions on religious expression, and hate crimes. Perhaps uniquely for the South Asian diaspora, data systems that pointedly disregard questions about religious faith in pursuit of information on ethnicity (as American federal systems do) cut off the most preferred way for minorities-within-the-minority group to self-identify.

This lack of data perpetuates exclusion from resources and opportunities, which is why it is essential to collect accurate data on to Sikh Americans, not only to achieve equity and inclusion, but also to be more accurate and efficient with the targeting of resources to community members. SALDEF is pushing for the collection of more granular data across several key areas which affect the Sikh community:

### ① HATE CRIMES:

Sikhs are among the most targeted groups for hate crimes. SALDEF advocates for a stronger culture of reporting and investigating hate crimes and bias incidents from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI down to local law enforcement to improve cultural sensitivity and response.

### ② COMMUNITY LOCATIONS:

Accurate data on where Sikh communities are located is essential for targeted advocacy and support. The inability of respondents to Census surveys to specify Sikh identity alongside national origin remains a major barrier to engaging with and targeting resources to communities who need it most.

### ③ EMPLOYMENT DATA:

To better assess economic insecurity and workplace discrimination, data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Transportation, and other federal departments that oversee large-scale employers of particularly blue-collar Sikh American workers must be made more broadly available to identify systemic issues Sikhs experience in the workplace.

### ④ IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT:

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) do not report any data on the backgrounds of people in detention. With transparent datasets, it would be possible to better understand how the community is impacted by heightened enforcement and also better support asylum seekers to have their civil rights respected while in DHS custody.

### ⑤ VIOLENCE AND FIREARM DATA:

With a long history of large-scale and smaller-scale firearm-based hate crimes against Sikhs, accurate data from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) are essential to assessing violence against Sikh Americans.

**Accurate data ensures that federal and state governments and community organizations are able to allocate resources to best address the unique needs of the Sikh American community. By doing so, SALDEF envisions a future where Sikh Americans are respected and recognized as an integral part of the nation, sharing values of service, equality, and freedom for all.**

# Civil Rights

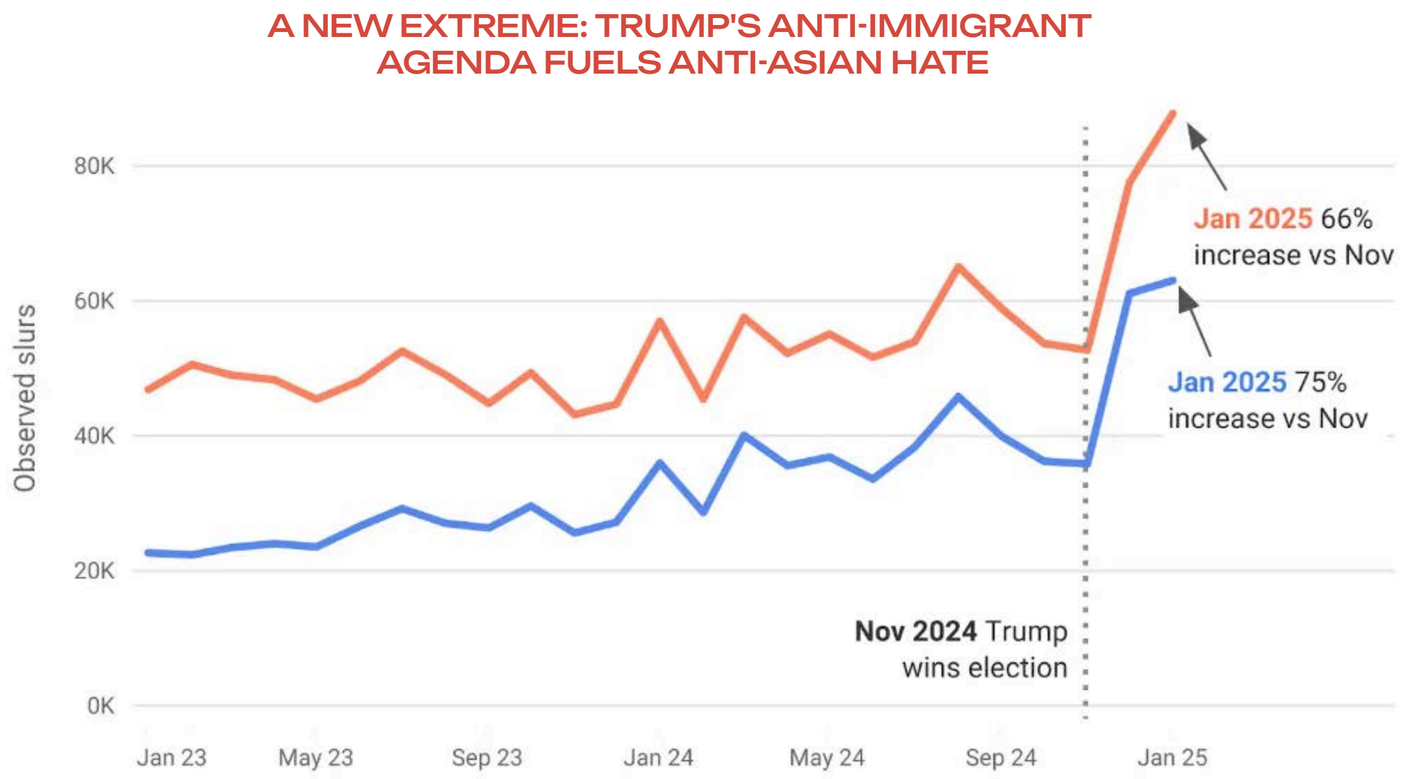
Equal protection under the law is an important tenet of our democracy and is necessary for a free and fair society. However, our country has not lived up to this ideal. The seizure of Indigenous peoples' land, the enslavement of Black Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and actions taken post 9/11 that disproportionately affected civil liberties of Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian groups are just a few examples of how discrimination based on race, religion, sex, gender, or identity has been ever-present since the founding of the country.

While progress has been made, rather than reckoning with our past and working towards a more equitable society, the United States is currently regressing on issues relating to our Constitutional rights, the right to vote, discrimination, federal privacy regulations, and reproductive rights. These should be foundational protections necessary for the health of our continued democracy.

## Attacks on Civil Rights from the Department of Justice (DOJ) - Civil Rights Division

The DOJ Civil Rights Division (CRT) was created in 1957 and enforces federal laws that protect against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, or other protected classes. AANHPI communities have relied on the CRT for years to intervene in cases of hate-based violence and discrimination in housing, schools, the workplace, and more.

In January, the U.S. Department of Justice ordered the CRT to pause all ongoing litigation and all other activity, including pursuing new cases or agreeing to settlements.




*Source: Stop AAPI Hate, February 2025*

Existing research shows that hate that is happening online is indicative of what is happening offline. These serious cases of hate and threats of harm based on race, coupled with the rolling back of the new investigations, threatens the safety of AAPI communities who since COVID-19, are already experiencing increased race-based violence.

AANHPI communities need an active DOJ to provide a recourse when their rights or safety have been violated. When a young woman of Chinese descent was stabbed on a bus by an assailant in Indiana because of her race last year, it was the CRT that stepped in. When a man drove his car into an Asian American man after encountering him outside of a post office with his three children while telling them to "go back to China," it was the CRT that prosecuted the case. When the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) denied religious accommodations for Sikh and Muslim correctional officers who maintained beards as articles of faith, the CRT obtained a court order protecting their rights. Our community members are put in danger as the Trump Administration weakens basic civil rights and protections.

## Reviving the China Initiative

In 2018, the first Trump Administration launched the China Initiative ostensibly to protect intellectual property and prevent economic espionage. However, in practice, the DOJ–with support from the FBI and other federal agencies–racially profiled and wrongfully prosecuted hundreds of Chinese American scholars and scientists for clerical errors on grant applications or immigration forms.

These wrongful prosecutions cost people their jobs and livelihoods and created a chilling effect on the scientific community that is still stifling American innovation and economic growth. Continued anti-China rhetoric by elected officials also contributes to fear, suspicion, and hostility towards all Asians Americans, regardless of their country of origin or citizenship status. This puts community members on edge: an estimated 53% of AAPIs believe there will be an increase in anti-AAPI hate crimes and incidents over the next four years.[1]

The China Initiative also wasted federal government resources as the DOJ previously "dropped charges quietly" before trial as cases were rejected by juries and judges for lack of evidence. Ultimately, the DOJ, under the Biden Administration, ended the China Initiative in 2022.

More on the China Initiative:

- The China Initiative was an unmitigated failure that caused lasting harm to U.S. national interests.
- Under the China Initiative federal agencies profiled and targeted Asian American scholars, scientists, and researchers based on their race, ethnicity, and/or national origin.
- The China Initiative's scrutiny of scientists, researchers, and scholars, along with xenophobic and anti-China rhetoric from government officials, have further fueled anti-Asian hate and violence against Asian Americans, as well as divisions in the workplace across the country.

This discriminatory and xenophobic policy will harm countless Asian Americans if revived under the Trump Administration.

## Voting Rights

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy. Advocates have sought to expand and facilitate access to voting for decades and the progress that has been made is being eroded under the pretext of voter fraud. According to the Brennan Center for Justice: ***as many as 11 percent of eligible voters do not have the kind of ID that is required by states with strict ID requirements, and that percentage is even higher among seniors, minorities, people with disabilities, low-income voters, and students. Many citizens find it difficult to obtain government photo IDs because the necessary documentation, such as a birth certificate, is often difficult or expensive to acquire.***[2]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Executive Order 14248: *"Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections"*<br><br>• Rescinding Biden Executive Order 14019: *"Promoting Access to Voting"* | Despite no credible evidence of widespread noncitizen voting in federal elections, the Trump Administration has issued an executive order to require documentary proof of citizenship in order to register to vote at the cost of disenfranchising potentially millions of eligible voters.<br><br>The Executive Order, "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections," will prevent millions of eligible voters from casting their ballots. For example, similar to legislation such as the SAVE Act, such policies would require that individuals provide proof of U.S. citizenship in person, including a passport or birth certificate, when registering to vote or re-registering to vote. Such hurdles will create further barriers for the more than 21 million individuals who do not have immediate access to such identification documents proving citizenship and the 3.8 million who do not have access to such documents at all. Access to such documents can cost time and/or money, which disadvantages individuals with lower incomes.<br><br>President Biden's EO 14019, built on decades of state-level efforts to integrate voter registration with public services, extending these principles to federal agencies. The order aimed to expand voter participation in a non-partisan manner by making voter registration more accessible to eligible citizens interacting with federal agencies.<br><br>By rescinding this executive order, the Trump Administration ended a non-partisan effort designed to strengthen voter participation and support democratic engagement. |

## Detainment and Deportation of Legal Immigrants and Permanent Residents in Violation of First Amendment Rights and Due Process

Throughout U.S. history, AANHPI communities have been censored and accused of being national security threats because of their racial identities or engagement in political speech. Weaponizing immigration enforcement and revoking statuses on these kinds of political grounds is unacceptable.

The Trump Administration has publicly pressured universities to retaliate against students who expressed support for Palestine, most notably Columbia University. Additionally, ICE has repeatedly been detaining legal residents and threatening deportation for their protected political speech. Some of these have happened with plain clothes officers, and there have been repeated attempts to interfere with due process rights.

**As of April 24, 2025 over 280 public colleges and private universities have identified 1,800+ international students and recent graduates who have had their legal status changed by the State Department.[3] 50% of students who had their visas revoked are of Indian origin.[4] While the Administration has temporarily paused its revocation of student visas, there is continued uncertainty regarding the length of time for the current pause and the development of further policies designed to terminate student visas.**

In addition to the unlawful arrest and detention of Mahmoud Khalil, a legal permanent resident, for his advocacy for Palestinian rights, other examples include:

- Ranjani Srinivasan, an Indian national and Fulbright Scholarship recipient at Columbia University left the United States out of fear she would be unlawfully detained for having attended protests in support of Palestine Her release from immigration custody six-weeks later was recently ordered by a federal judge.
- The Department of Homeland Security detained Badar Khan Suri, an Indian graduate fellow at Georgetown University, who also expressed pro-Palestine views.
- Rumeysa Ozturk, a Turkish doctoral student at Tufts, was detained by plain-clothed ICE officers for writing an op-ed in a student paper that was supportive of Palestine. Her release from immigration custody six weeks later was recently ordered by a federal judge.
- Yunseo Chung, a South Korean green card holder studying at Columbia who has lived in the U.S. since she was 7, was targeted for enforcement by ICE and had to go into hiding. Recently, a court ordered ICE to cease enforcement actions against her.

The Trump Administration's blatant targeting and silencing of dissent has a chilling effect on students who are in the United States to further their education. Threatening to deport students because they have exercised their First Amendment right and denying them their due process rights is unconstitutional and a slippery slope for all other immigrant communities.

## Attacks on the Transgender and Non-Binary Community

Trans and Gender Diverse identities have long been a part of our AANHPI communities, with these identities being deeply rooted in Indigenous cultures across the Asia and Pacific regions. Identities such as fa'afafine in Samoa, māhū in Hawai'i, kathoey in Thailand, and hijra in parts of South Asia are integral to our communities, with individuals within these groups often identifying as trans and gender diverse.

The Administration has spent significant time during its first 100 days targeting trans people. Despite accounting for less than 1% of the U.S. population, the President has signed five executive orders to prevent trans and non-binary people from living as their identified gender.

Policies that negatively target LGBTQIA+ people, especially youth, have tremendous implications on mental health. Many youth struggle with mental health, access to gender-affirming care, and trans youth disproportionately have high rates of suicide risk.[5] Creating policies that affirm, support, and foster acceptance for trans people will help address this mental health epidemic.

### LGBTQIA+ YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

THE TREVOR PROJECT'S 2024 NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE REPORTED

**90%** of LGBTQ+ young people said their well-being was negatively impacted due to recent politics.

ANTI-TRANS POLICIES DEEPLY IMPACT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUTH AND SURVEYS HAVE SHOWN THAT WHEN TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY YOUTH FOUND THEIR SCHOOL TO BE GENDER-AFFIRMING THERE WERE LOWER REPORTED RATES OF ATTEMPTING SUICIDE.

**45%** of transgender and nonbinary young people reported that they or their family have considered moving to a different state because of LGBTQ+-related politics and laws.[6]

A 2022 STUDY OF AAPI LGBTQ YOUTH BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13-24 FOUND THAT

**40%** OF YOUTH CONSIDERED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR

**50%** OF AAPI TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY YOUTH | **49%** OF NHPI LBGTQ YOUTH.[7]

**68%** of AAPI LGBTQ youth reported experiencing symptoms related to anxiety.[8]

**54%** of AAPI LGBTQ youth reported discrimination based on their race/ethnicity over the past year.[9]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| • Executive Order 14168: *"Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism And Restoring Biological Truth To The Federal Government"*<br><br>• Executive Order 14201: *"Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports"*<br><br>• Executive Order 14183: *"Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness"* banning trans people from military service.<br><br>• Executive Order 14187: *"Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation"*<br><br>• Executive Order 14173: *"Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity"* | EO 14168 denies accommodations for trans people and requires that their birth sex is the only way they can be identified on passports or within agency laws, regulations, and guidance. It ignores previous Supreme Court precedent to allow discrimination against trans people and falsely reasons that this is necessary to protect women from predators.<br><br>With EO 14201, the Administration is threatening to remove all federal funding from schools that allow trans women to compete in the Women's division. In response, the NCAA banned trans women from competing in women's sports. NCAA President Charlie Baker had previously testified that out of the more than 530,000 student athletes in the NCAA, fewer than 10 are transgender.[10] While framed as a matter of fairness, this EO was based on misinformation and stigmatization, further excluding trans youth from opportunities to thrive and belong.<br><br>Gender affirming care was another critical targeted area that prohibits federal funding for gender affirming care for anyone under the age of 19, regardless of medical necessity or professional standards of care. This led to widespread shutdowns of gender affirming services for youth, as providers and institutions feared penalties or loss of funding. The impact on trans youth and their families was profound. Denied access to medically supported care, many young people were left vulnerable and the trauma of being forcibly disconnected from affirming healthcare environments.<br><br>These attacks on Trans and Gender Diverse identities reinforce harmful standards of femininity, creating a culture where all women and girls-Cis and Trans alike-are subjected to increased scrutiny and policing of their bodies. We have already seen women asked for information about their assigned sex at birth, and harassment in bathrooms and sports if their appearance does not conform to expectations for a ciswoman.<br><br>Finally, a Pentagon memo was made public in February from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to remove trans servicemembers and anyone with a diagnosis of, symptoms of, or a history of gender dysphoria from the service. The memo also says that pronoun usage must conform to sex and not gender. Thousands of transgender troops currently serve and have openly for almost a decade. |

## Reproductive Rights

On June 24, 2022 the Supreme Court overturned the precedent of *Roe v. Wade* with their decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. This ended the federal protection for abortion rights and left the decision up to individual states. Since then, 12 states have total abortion bans. While these states do have exceptions for life of the pregnant person, six of them have no exception for the health of the pregnant person, eight of these states have no exception for rape or incest, and nine of them have no exception for fatal fetal anomaly. People have died as a result of these laws as physicians face uncertainty on whether procedures they carry out might be considered illegal and result in imprisonment.

In response, President Biden signed two executive orders to allow the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to protect people's health privacy and properly educate them about their rights, and for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to protect those rights under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTLA). The orders also instructed departments to work on increasing access to contraceptives without increasing costs.

**Most Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander adults believe abortion should be legal (79%) in all or most cases, and want Congress to pass a law guaranteeing access nationwide (75%)[11]**

**About 9 in 10 AAPI adults support legal abortion in cases where a pregnant person's health is at risk, for instances of rape or incest, or the presence of a fatal fetal abnormality, aligning with the general U.S. population. AAPI adults are more inclined than the general public to support legal abortion for any reason (68% vs. 54%)[12]**

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Executive Order 14182: *"Enforcing the Hyde Amendment"*<br><br>• Trump's DOJ Endangers Emergency Abortion Care - Reproductive Freedom for All | President Trump's executive order repeals these two Biden Administration executive orders and reaffirms his commitment to the Hyde Amendment. The Trump DOJ also chose not to continue a previous abortion rights case started under the Biden Administration, *U.S. v. Idaho*. This case would have required hospitals in Idaho (where abortion is banned) to still provide emergency abortion care under EMTLA.<br><br>These decisions directly undermine reproductive health as it indicated the Trump Administration will no longer enforce protections that were previously put in place. This means less support for public education efforts, and less abortion access. |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | The Hyde Amendment prohibits federal money from being spent on abortion services (unless the patient's life is endangered or the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest). This means that those unable to get abortions are those on Medicaid and least able to afford it. The burden of banning federal abortion money falls mainly on individuals with low income, and disproportionately on women of color.<br><br>Among those covered by Medicaid, one in four are forced to continue the pregnancy, often due to cost. In 2021, 22.5% of Asian mothers gave birth while covered by Medicaid. For Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, that percentage was 28.9%, while for Black and Hispanic mothers, it was 64% and 58.1%, respectively. The Hyde Amendment leaves pregnant people with limited options and lesser care than those with private insurance.<br><br>In the military, support previously available to service members who needed to travel for care is no longer available. |

# Immigration

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander experiences are heavily shaped by U.S. immigration policy. Asian Americans are the only racial group that is majority foreign-born (65%).[1] Any changes to immigration policy will disproportionately impact Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Immigrant stories are diverse – not only in where they come from, but also how they arrived. Many families across our communities can trace their immigrant roots back for multiple generations, while others arrived more recently as refugees, and others contributed as part of the high-skilled workforce. The immigration system is long overdue for significant reform, and multiple executive actions from the Trump Administration only exacerbates the conditions for many who are fearful of threats to birthright citizenship, discriminatory travel bans, separating families due to deportation, and targeting student visa holders.

**Immigration policy is increasingly becoming a priority for the AAPI community. 42% of AAPI adults name immigration as one of their top policy issues in 2025, up from the 29% in 2023.[2] No other issue saw a gain of this magnitude, underscoring the growing importance of this issue to the community.**

## Birthright Citizenship

For more than 150 years, our Constitution has guaranteed that any person born in the U.S. is a citizen. Birthright citizenship was part of our country's reckoning with the legacy of slavery. It guaranteed that the children of enslaved people could be full-fledged Americans and that we would never again consign certain groups of people to a legal underclass.

Now, the Trump Administration is attempting to circumvent a Constitutional right through an executive order. Executive Order 14160 would bar citizenship to a child born in the United States if the mother is unlawfully present or lawfully present on a temporary basis and the father is neither a U.S. citizen nor a lawful permanent resident.

**About half (56%) of AAPI adults oppose eliminating birthright citizenship for children born in the U.S. to parents who are here on a temporary work or student visa, while less than one quarter (24%) support it.**

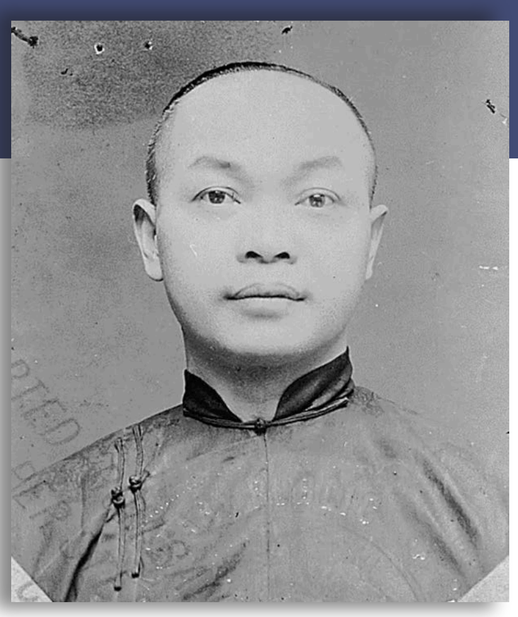
**Similarly, 50% of AAPI adults oppose eliminating birthright citizenship for children born to immigrants who are undocumented. [3]**

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| • Executive Order 14160: *"Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship"* aims to end birthright citizenship. | Attacks on birthright citizenship would impact all Americans, especially children of immigrants. 5.5 million U.S.-born children reside with at least one undocumented parent, and 1.8 million have two undocumented parents. According to our estimates, one in three noncitizen Asian Americans are undocumented, with approximately 800,000 Asian American children living with at least one undocumented parent.[4]<br><br>Ending birthright citizenship will have significant consequences. According to the lawsuit filed by 18 states, the District of Columbia, and the City and County of San Francisco, over the course of just one year, the EO will harm 150,000 children. By 2050, the Migration Policy Institute estimates that the EO will rob 5 to 8 million babies of citizenship. **In other words, the EO could nearly double the population of undocumented immigrants in the United States.**<br><br>Ending birthright citizenship would lead to a class of stateless children who will be subject to deportation and vulnerable to immigration enforcement. They would lose access to essential services like health care, education, and nutrition which are denied to undocumented children. These children will grow up without passports, social security cards, access to jobs and federal student loans, and the right to vote. This would perpetuate racial inequality, make them vulnerable to exploitation, and lead to widespread economic, social, and political marginalization. Being stateless can create a perpetual identity crisis, making children more susceptible to psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety. [5]<br><br>Furthermore, these harms will reverberate across generations. The children of noncitizens with various statuses in the U.S., including parents on various work visas, student visa holders, various protected status like DACA, and asylees will also experience impacts from the Order.[6]<br><br>Enforcing this birthright citizenship ban would lead to large scale racial profiling as immigrant families are required to prove their status. Immigration enforcement is already rife with profiling abuses. For example, this Niskanen Center study found that ICE mistakenly identified more than 2,800 U.S. citizens for deportation with one U.S. citizen unlawfully detained for 3 years. |

## UNITED STATES V. WONG KIM ARK (1898)

***United States v. Wong Kim Ark*** **set important precedent on the interpretation of the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. In 1873, Wong Kim Ark was born in San Francisco to Chinese immigrant parents. As an adult, after a visit to China, he was denied re-entry to the United States with immigration officials claiming he was not a citizen under the Chinese Exclusion Act, which effectively barred all immigration and naturalization of Chinese people.**

**Wong sued the federal government and the Supreme Court ruled that Wong was a citizen as he was born in the United States. This landmark ruling established precedent for birthright citizenship – that all people born in the United States are guaranteed citizenship, regardless of the immigration status of their parents.**



Wong Kim Ark in 1904.
Source: Public Domain

According to Pew Research, in 2022, 34% of Asian Americans are the U.S.-born children of immigrant parents – citizen and non-citizen alike.

In other words, 7.8 million Asian Americans benefited from birthright citizenship. Trump's EO casts deep uncertainty over the lives of the more than 3 million Asian people who are here either with temporary lawful status or who are undocumented and their families.

## Extreme Vetting and Exclusion

The Muslim Ban during the first Trump Administration was a cruel and racist action that separated families. It was discriminatory and the U.S. government should not repeat this blatant racial profiling of immigrants by issuing new travel bans. History shows that travel bans are nothing new to our communities, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers, denied Chinese residents to be naturalized, and made it extremely difficult for Chinese residents to re-enter the U.S. after traveling abroad. The Trump Administration's Executive Order 14161, "*Protecting The United States From Foreign Terrorists And Other National Security And Public Safety Threats*" sets the stage for a radical and discriminatory reshaping of our immigration system.

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Executive Order 14161: *"Protecting The United States From Foreign Terrorists And Other National Security And Public Safety Threats"*<br><br>• Reinstating travel bans for certain countries. | Requires federal agencies to vet and screen all foreign nationals intending to enter, or are already present in the U.S. Once these countries are identified, DHS will take immediate steps to exclude or remove any individuals from countries listed.<br><br>The current administration may reinstate and expand upon directives President Trump issued during his first term, restricting travel to the U.S. to certain foreign nationals from several predominantly Muslim-majority countries. The new set of restrictions include countries that were not part of the original list, such as Haiti and Belarus, and places additional scrutiny on governments that the U.S. deems to have inadequate vetting practices.[7]<br><br>As characterized by the National Immigration Law Center, "[c]ategorical, country-based travel bans are an unjust and unwarranted form of collective punishment. The United States already has extremely stringent screening measures designed to identify potential threats, and this Order significantly expands those to the point where it is impossible to conclude that these travel bans are motivated by anything other than racial animus." Citizens from banned countries would be unable to visit the U.S. unless they qualify for special exemptions, which could affect families, students, business professionals, and tourists. Individuals traveling for educational purposes including those from countries like Myanmar might face additional hurdles in obtaining student visas.[8] |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | Trump's executive order may result in an even more pernicious travel ban. Early reporting indicates 43 countries will be on the travel ban. This effort will rip apart families and loved ones and encourage discrimination and profiling based on race, ethnicity, and country of origin. Asian and Pacific Island countries on the list include:<br><br>● Bhutan<br>● North Korea<br>● Laos<br>● Myanmar<br>● Pakistan<br>● Cambodia<br>● Vanuatu<br><br>The new ban would expand in scope and reach across three continents, potentially reshaping the U.S. immigration landscape for generations to come. |

## Deportation and Enforcement

The Trump Administration has openly ignored the due process rights of immigrants and defied legal orders by targeting individuals through escalated deportation and enforcement efforts. AANHPIs are U.S. citizens, DREAMers, TPS holders, formerly incarcerated community members, adoptees, students, workers, and Compact of Free Association (COFA) citizens, among others–all of whom are subject to further vulnerabilities under the Administration's harmful policies and actions.

According to AAPI Data, there are 1.7 million Asian undocumented immigrants in the United States. 1 out of 7 Asian immigrants in the U.S. is undocumented, and most come from India (725,000), China, (375,000), Philippines (130,000), and Korea (110,000). In a report by Stop AAPI Hate, an estimated 66% surge in anti-Asian slurs following Trump's election win and increasing anti-immigrant hate, peaking in January 2025.[9]

President Trump signed several Executive Orders that expand immigration enforcement which has led to the escalated deportation of members of the AAPI community. Since January, the Administration has indicated that over 100,000 immigrants have been deported including those of Chinese, Indian, Nepalese, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Hmong, Bhutanese, and other heritages.

## AAPI ADULTS HAVE STRONG OPINIONS ON THE METHODS OF ARRESTING AND DETAINING UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS.

**55%**

of AAPI adults oppose separating undocumented parents from children who are U.S. citizens

**52%**

oppose arresting undocumented immigrants while at a church or place of worship

**60%**

oppose arresting undocumented people while they are in a hospital.[10]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Executive Order 14159: *"Protecting the American People Against Invasion"*<br>• Executive Order 14165: *"Securing Our Borders"*<br>• Presidential Proclamation: *"Invocation of the Alien Enemies Act Regarding the Invasion of the United States by Tren De Aragua"* | By issuing these EOs, the administration can deport AAPI immigrants without due process. Without due process, immigrants do not have a chance to defend themselves before they are deported. For instance, the proclamation invoking the Alien Enemies Act allowed the government to detain hundreds of immigrants, forcing them to sign documents they could not read or understand because it was only available in English, boarded them on planes, then shipped them to El Salvador, where they are being detained in the largest prison in the Western Hemisphere. A federal district court has since found that the President's invocation of the AEA is unlawful.<br><br>The EO that expands expedited removal means a person can be deported without a court proceeding unless they express a fear or return or pass a threshold fear screening interview. Since most immigrants subjected to expedited removal have little to no access to counsel, this has long resulted in serious abuses and due process concerns. |

### DEPORTATION OF LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

**Father and husband Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia was deported to El Salvador by the U.S. government in March of 2025 despite being a legal permanent resident. The Trump Administration has since admitted that it was due to an "administrative error". The Supreme Court ordered the Administration to facilitate his return, but both U.S. and Salvadoran officials claim they cannot comply. This defiance of judicial authority and disregard for due process signals a dangerous erosion of legal and human rights by the United States government.**

## IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT TARGETS HISTORICALLY PROTECTED SPACES

**On January 21, the Trump Administration rescinded the longstanding Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy of not permitting immigration enforcement actions at "protected areas" that provide essential services like healthcare, education, and community support.**

**This opened the door to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducting surveillance, investigations, arrests, and raids at, among many other places, houses of worship. A coalition of Quaker Meetings immediately filed a lawsuit challenging the recission of the protected areas policy, and were soon joined by the Sikh Gurdwara Sahib West Sacramento and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as additional plaintiffs.**

**A preliminary victory followed shortly afterwards: a U.S. District Court issued an initial ruling preventing the Trump Administration from allowing immigration officials to enter the Plaintiffs' specific houses of worship indiscriminately to conduct immigration enforcement operations. The lawsuit continues to make its way through the legal system.**

**Over half of AANHPIs surveyed either strongly or somewhat oppose arresting people who are undocumented and in the country while they are at church or other places of worship.[11]**

This violation of due process echoes a dark chapter in United States history when Japanese Americans were incarcerated simply due to their national origin. Indeed, the last time the Alien Enemies Act was invoked was during World War II, and that law was used to justify summarily rounding up Japanese Americans, as well as German and Italian Americans. Innocent people were framed as "alien enemies," and separated from their families and lost their homes, businesses, and livelihoods.

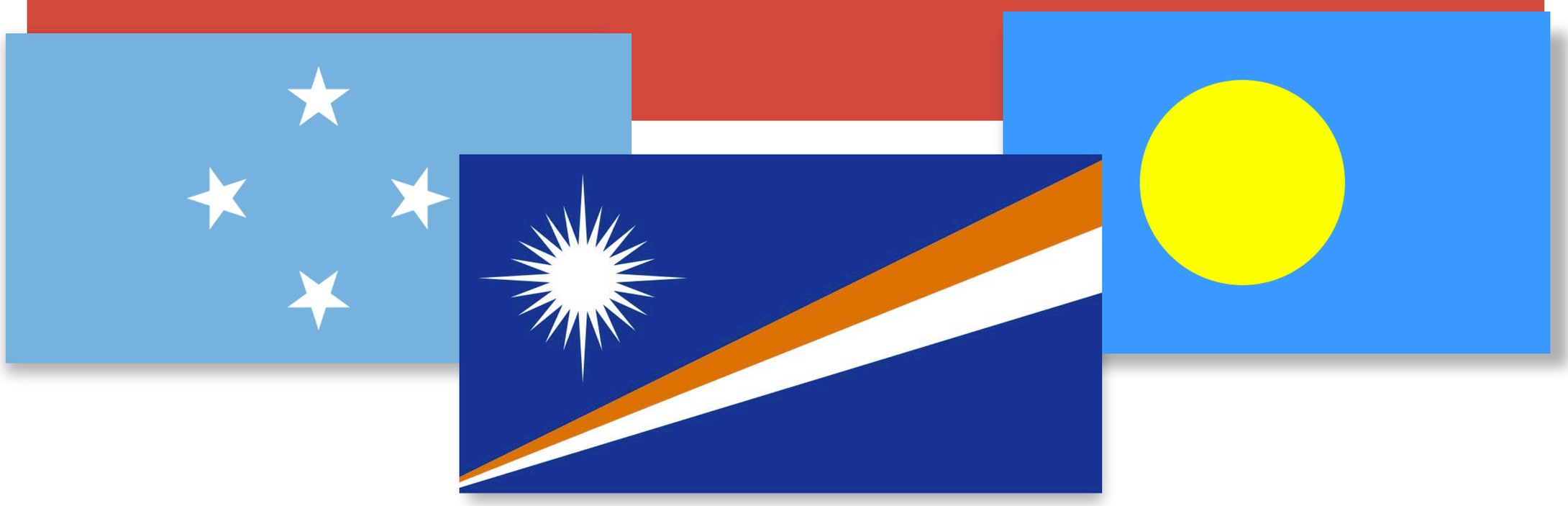
Furthermore, the registry described in the "Protecting the American People Against Invasion" EO is eerily similar to the post-9/11 National Security Entry Exit Registration System (NSEERS), which also required the registration of people from mostly Muslim and Arab-majority nations. In 2016, the government ended NSEERS because racial, ethnic, and religious profiling did not result in useful intelligence information.

## COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau are classified as lawful non-immigrants under the Compact of Free Association with the United States. It allows them to live, work and study in the U.S., have access to some federal benefits, and travel freely between their home countries and the U.S with only a passport.

Hawai'i is home to most COFA citizens in the country, yet there has been a concerted effort from ICE targeting those who have had contact with the criminal legal system, including those who have been arrested but not charged. Deportations of COFA citizens are underway, separating families and leaving behind children who were born in Hawai'i and are American citizens.[12]

COFA citizens also reside across other states, including Arkansas, where the Republic of the Marshall Islands Consulate, community leaders, and attorneys are working to address the concerns and fears of many Marshallese families who experience increased anxiety over getting detained and deported. Similar to Hawai'i, there is a trend of targeting those who have a criminal misdemeanor or felony offense, and local attorneys warn that federal immigration enforcement agencies are not transparent about detainees in custody, including Marshallese citizens.[13] Once detained, they are put in a restrictive booking status and their families have no way of contacting them or getting any information on them.



# THE WARTIME ACT OF 1798 (ALIEN ENEMIES ACT) AND THE INJUSTICE OF JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION

BORDER PATROLMEN, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, INSPECT THE BAGGAGE OF WOMEN GOING TO CRYSTAL CITY, TX INTERNMENT CAMP.

AUGUST 1943-FEBRUARY 13, 1944 ISSEI MEN AT SANTA FE NEW MEXICO DETENTION CENTER

In 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt invoked the AEA, designating Japanese, German, and Italian nationals as “enemy aliens” subject to arrest and detention. This dehumanizing classification and community profiling created widespread fear and division. Federal law enforcement raided communities, targeting first-generation leaders, such as Buddhist ministers, and they were relocated and confined in internment camps across the country.

19 states had camps to hold internees under the AEA, separate from the 10 Wartime Relocation Authority camps in which Japanese Americans would later be incarcerated. During WWII, over 31,000 Japanese, German, Italian, and Japanese Latin American nationals were arrested and detained, including Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany.

President Roosevelt expanded his wartime authority with Executive Order 9066, sanctioning the mass incarceration of over 125,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. In 1943, the government mandated that all incarcerated individuals take a questionnaire – which was highly unethical and controversial– to determine who was “disloyal.” They then moved them to Tule Lake War Relocation Center,which was specifically converted into a maximum-security segregation center for this purpose. By the end of the year, the army had imposed martial law over the camp.

> **JUST AS THE ALIEN ENEMIES ACT WAS USED AGAINST JAPANESE NATIONALS DURING WORLD WAR II, PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IS SEEKING TO TARGET ALL VENEZUELANS FOR AN EASIER PATH TOWARD DEPORTATION.**
>
> JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DAVID INOUE, MARCH 21, 2025

President Roosevelt then enacted Public Law 405 under the pretext of “national security,” which ostensibly allowed U.S. citizens to renounce their citizenship during wartime, but in practice was a tool of coercion – leading to forced repatriation to Japan – even for those with no connection to the country. These actions are some of the most egregious violations of foundational civil rights and due process.

AS A JAPANESE IMMIGRANT WITH DACA, I'M REMINDED OF HOW THE ADMIN'S THREAT TO INVOKE THE ALIEN ENEMIES ACT ECHOES THE UNJUST INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS IN WWII.
THE ADMINISTRATION'S WEAPONIZATION OF MASS DEPORTATIONS WITHOUT PROVIDING DUE PROCESS WILL CAUSE IRREPARABLE HARM TO OUR COMMUNITIES, LEAVING A STAIN ON OUR AMERICAN HISTORY. TO PERSEVERE THROUGH THIS DARK MOMENT, WE SHALL STAND FOR HOPE OVER FEAR, BUILDING BRIDGES RATHER THAN WALLS, AND DEEPENING DEMOCRACY INSTEAD OF DEPORTING FAMILIES." -

**DAISHI MIGUEL-TANAKA,** IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ADVOCATE

Survivors of the incarceration camps and their descendants fought for decades for a formal recognition of their unjust persecution from the federal government. In 1988, a federal commission determined that the internment and incarceration was a result of "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." As a result, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act, providing an apology and reparations to survivors of incarceration. In 2022, 80 years after the signing of Executive Order 9066, President Joe Biden formally recognized February 19th as the Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II.

Though historic, no apology or financial compensation can truly undo the harm inflicted on the Japanese American community. President Ford, in signing an official recission of EO 9066, declared: "*I call upon the American people to affirm with me this American Promise -- that we have learned from the tragedy of that long-ago experience forever to treasure liberty and justice for each individual American, and resolve that this kind of action* ***shall never again be repeated.***"

The Japanese American community's experience during World War II serves as a dire warning to the future that the mistakes of the past must not be repeated. The modern-day invocation of the AEA leaves the door open for this shameful stain on American history to be repeated. Regardless of immigration status, the AEA remains a threat to the civil rights of all people residing in the United States and must be repealed.

THE INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS 80 YEARS AGO IS A REMINDER TO US TODAY OF THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES WE INVITE WHEN WE ALLOW RACISM, FEAR AND XENOPHOBIA TO FESTER.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN, MARCH 4, 2022

# Health

Everyone should have access to resources in order to live healthy lives. Many AANHPIs face unique challenges accessing quality healthcare including language barriers, the lack of insurance coverage, and affordability. Many groups, such as Samoans, Koreans, and Vietnamese, continue to have disproportionately high rates of being uninsured.[1] Although many AAs and NHPIs experience serious mental health problems, our communities have the lowest utilization rates for mental healthcare among all populations.[2] Moreover, many AANHPIs are limited-English proficient and low-income, adding to existing barriers to accessing healthcare and behavioral health services.

**A strong majority of the AANHPI community (59%) believe we are spending too little to improve and protect the nation's health, and 79% believe the cost of health care should be a high priority for the federal government representing the highest issue area in a recent poll.[3]**

The current Administration continues to demonstrate that they will not address such disparities; highlighted by their decision to restructure the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The resulting abrupt mass layoffs of federal workers across several health agencies, has serious implications for primary care/health access, behavioral health, funding, and community health data.

The scope and scale of the Trump Administration's public health agenda is immense and its consequences are staggering. From undermining public health, decimating health research, and disrupting the underlying infrastructure of our health system, communities across the country will be less informed, less safe, and ultimately, less healthy.

## Primary Care and Health Care Access

Medicaid provides essential health coverage to children, seniors, people with disabilities, and low-wage workers. 3.5 million Asian Americans and 200,000 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders rely on Medicaid for health access and affordability.[4]

However, the revocation of Executive Order *14009: Strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act* revives Executive Order 13813: reestablishing Trump's policy of *"promoting competition in healthcare markets and limiting excessive consolidation throughout the healthcare system.*" Of the more than 2 million AANHPIs living below the federal poverty line, 14% of Asian Americans and 22% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are eligible for Medicaid under the ACA.[5] The impact of such executive orders, combined with the recent reduction in workforce to HHS such as the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) which determines federal poverty guidelines, could further lead to drastic cuts in assistance and support to families with low income including at least 80 million people throughout the country.[6]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| • Reinstated Executive Order 13813: which rescinds Biden Administration action to strengthen Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act from 2021.<br><br>• Executive Order 14187: *"Protecting Children From Chemical and Surgical Mutilation"* targets gender affirming care and transgender youth, by banning federal funds to institutions that provide such care.<br><br>• Undermining vaccine confidence with misinformation. | Attacks on Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act would result in a surge in uninsured patients, higher prices for insurance and health services nationwide, administrative overload, strain on safety-net providers, and workforce challenges. Additionally, it would jeopardize health coverage for millions of low-income AANHPI individuals, including immigrants who rely on safety-net programs. It disproportionately impacts communities with chronic illnesses like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Uninsured people are far more likely to go without essential care due to cost and losing Medicaid would increase the likelihood of eviction by more than 25%.[7]<br><br>As Medicaid is the largest payer for mental health and substance use services, any cuts threaten access to therapy, counseling, and medication for those in need. Medicaid provides health care access to over 72 million Americans and serves as the largest payer for mental health and substance use services in the country, of which 4.5 million are AANHPI and 80% lived in medicaid expansion states. It covers office visits, rehabilitation, and peer support at higher rates than private insurance plans and helps connect individuals—including veterans, children, and new mothers—to essential services like housing, employment, and nutrition assistance.<br><br>For trans youth and their families, attacks on their health is an attack on their ability to lead a life free of discrimination and hate. As some advocates in the South Asian community have stressed, trans and gender-expansive South Asians face barriers to evidence-based, lifesaving care. Reproductive care restrictions disproportionately impact South Asian women with limited access and cultural stigma. Health disparities remain prevalent in Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders (QTPI) communities. In comparison to straight and cisgender Pacific Islanders, they are twice as likely to report having depression, asthma, and cancer, and almost twice as likely to have Medicaid, but ten percent less likely to have a personal doctor. Factors such as experiencing discrimination and physical assault and threats, verbal assault or abuse, threatens the wellness of QTPIs and are twice as likely to report not always feeling safe and secure compared to straight and cisgender Pacific Islanders.[8] |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | The Trump Administration's attacks on vaccines could have devastating effects on communities across the country. By calling into question the safety and efficacy of vaccines, this can lead to lower vaccine uptake, even for well-established vaccines like those for measles, polio, and influenza. This is especially concerning for multilingual and immigrant communities where access to trusted information is already limited. |

" AS A DISABLED KOREAN AMERICAN, MY PARENTS KNEW I MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING EMPLOYMENT RIGHT AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, SO THEY HELPED ME ENROLL IN MEDICAID TO ALLOW ME TO RECEIVE MEDICAL CARE UNTIL I OBTAINED EMPLOYMENT IN MY MID 20S. IT ALLOWED ME TO STAY MEDICALLY STABLE ENOUGH TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT-BASED HEALTH INSURANCE. MEDICAID ALSO HELPED BOTH MY BROTHERS WHO HAVE DISABILITIES, ONE WHO WAS ALSO EVENTUALLY ABLE TO GET A JOB AND GET EMPLOYEE-BASED INSURANCE AND ANOTHER WHO STAYED ON MEDICAID HIS WHOLE LIFE. MEDICAID IS A LIFE SUSTAINING PROGRAM FOR MANY, NO MATTER IF IT PROVIDES A BRIDGE TO STABLE EMPLOYMENT OR IF YOU NEED IT TO PROVIDE A LIFETIME'S WORTH OF CARE.

CUTS TO MEDICAID, WHETHER THROUGH STRICTER PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS LIKE PROOF OF HOURS WORKED, CONTINUAL REVIEWS, OR LIFETIME CAPS ON BENEFITS, OR EVEN BLOCK GRANTING THE PROGRAM WILL LEAD TO A REDUCTION IN SERVICES IN STATES, LONGER WAITLISTS, AND FEWER PEOPLE ABLE TO QUALIFY. THIS WILL LEAD TO DISABLED PEOPLE AND OTHER VULNERABLE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO GET SICKER, BECOME INSTITUTIONALIZED, OR DIE."

**MIA IVES-RUBLEE,**
**DISABILITY JUSTICE ADVOCATE**

## WHERE CULTURE MEETS CARE

UTOPIA Washington is a community-rooted organization based in Washington state, founded and led by Pacific Islander transgender women who identify as Fa'afafine.[9] UTOPIA creates pathways to empowerment for Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders (QTPI) and LGBTQIA+ individuals, from essential health services, career support, and safe community spaces where all voices are heard, valued, and uplifted.

This work is so important because 40% of LGBTQIA+ Pacific Islanders report experiencing mental health challenges, with suicide rates notably higher within the QTPI community compared to the general population. Healthcare access is another major issue, as many in the community face significant barriers in accessing gender-affirming care, culturally competent healthcare, and basic medical services.

UTOPIA's Youth program empowers LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, focusing on building confidence, resilience, and cultural pride in young individuals. Through teaching traditional Pasifika practices like Talanoa (storytelling) and inter-general programming, youth are able to connect and preserve shared histories, find community and peer support, and celebrate the Pasifika cultural legacy. Youth programming and mentorship that emphasizes leadership, cultural pride, and community building— is critical for QTPIs navigating their identities and social barriers at home and in education.

UTOPIA also runs the Mapu Maia Clinic, a free medical clinic to ensure that all community members have access to healthcare, regardless of their economic background. By offering wraparound services from primary and preventative care and mental health services as well as gender–affirming care and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for trangender individuals, the clinic is able to meet the diverse needs of patients. By providing these resources UTOPIA is working to make sure community members meet their basic healthcare needs, are able to heal, and be active and engaged community members.

UTOPIA's programming in building resilience and providing support creates long-term systemic change for the community where everyone can find belonging and thrive.

UTOPIA WA
Community Outreach

Youth gather to participate in UTOPIA's programming

## Behavioral Health

AANHPIs have among the lowest rates of utilization of mental health service, often due to language barriers and cultural stigma.[10] Studies indicate that 65.3% of the estimated 2.9 million AAs and NHPIs who meet criteria for a mental health problem do not receive treatment.[11] On February 13, 2025, the President's Make America Healthy Again Commission was established under Executive Order 14212, which could have significant consequences for communities and families struggling with mental health crises.

### SPOTLIGHT ON AANHPI MENTAL HEALTH

**Furthermore, according to the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 65.3% of the 2.9 million AANHPIs who meet criteria for a mental health problem do not receive treatment.[12] Asian adults were more likely to access telehealth treatment compared to inpatient treatment or prescription medication, highlighting telehealth as a promising avenue for mental health support. AANHPIs already face high stigma around mental health and low rates of seeking care. Any reduction in accessible behavioral health services—especially via telehealth—could deepen existing disparities.**

**Additionally, telehealth is especially valuable in rural regions, where there are often shortages in available healthcare providers and other resources. Losing access to telehealth will likely lead to more service gaps across communities that already have limited options in getting professional help.**

Imminent cuts to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Medicaid will impact the access, use, and outcomes of mental health services, local agencies/providers and grant programs working to support the mental health of our communities. Such cuts would mean less oversight for SAMHSA programs that help people with the most severe mental illnesses, block efforts to improve 988 awareness and crisis response systems for people, reduce the progress made on reducing overdose deaths, and inflict harm on efforts in bringing mental health resources to rural communities.[13] Our understanding of how chronic and behavioral health conditions develop has improved over time, and environmental factors may play a larger role in disease development than previously thought.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services noted that the U.S. was already experiencing a mental health crisis, with the opioid epidemic already on the rise amid an ongoing shortage of mental health providers across the country. The pandemic led to employment, housing, and financial insecurity for many Americans. This kind of instability often leads to elevated stress levels, and chronic stress is linked to cancer, autoimmune disease, and behavioral health conditions.

## Funding, Workforce, and Data

The Trump Administration has also directly impacted the country's health research capacity. Cuts have led to restrictions on the National Institute of Health (NIH) that include cancellations of research-grant reviews, travel, external communications and hiring, and issued orders that threaten to broadly undercut the financial foundation of university based research, including reductions of the workforce. Reduced investment in research impacts disease tracking, vaccine development, cancer research, and culturally competent intervention models. Cuts to global health aid risk resurgence of diseases like Tuberculosis (TB), affecting transnational AANHPI communities. AANHPIs face significant health disparities such as TB and are disproportionately affected by it. AANHPIs account for 36% of TB cases in the U.S., with AAs facing TB rates 32 times higher and NHPIs facing TB rates 40 times higher than non-Hispanic whites.[14]

The availability of comprehensive and publicly accessible health data is essential for scientific research and evidence-based policymaking. Federal health agencies collect and disseminate data that inform strategies to address chronic diseases, health disparities, and emerging health threats. Removing such data from public access hinders researchers, healthcare providers, and policymakers from making informed decisions that protect and promote community health. The lack of data will not resolve problems but instead make them worse and perpetuate the erasure of whole communities, including AANHPIs.

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Restructuring of HHS workforce<br>• Executive Order 14187: *"Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy"*<br>• Presidential Memorandum Return to In-Person Work<br>• Executive Order 14151: *"Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing"* | The Trump Administration's decision to fire 10,000+ federal workers from the Department of Health and Human Services will effectively shutter a number of critical offices and functions within the department. Many of the jobs are based in the Washington area, but also in Atlanta, where the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is based, and in smaller offices throughout the country. This includes:<br>• Centers for Disease Control (CDC) - Protects from health, safety, and security threats and manages responses to global pandemics.<br>• Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) - Provides access to health care for economically and medically vulnerable individuals and families.<br>• National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) - Leads federal research efforts to better understand prevention, treatment, and recovery. |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | • Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) - Works to advance behavioral health and improve lives impacted by mental and substance use disorders.<br>• Office of Minority Health - Leads efforts to improve understanding of minority health and disparities through federal grants, monitoring, and engaging stakeholders including AANHPIs.<br><br>The impact on ending remote work cuts telemental health services and essentially leads to exacerbated staff shortages. According to the New York Times, thousands of mental health providers, including many who were hired for fully remote positions, now work full time from federal office spaces. This is a jarring policy reversal for the V.A., which pioneered the practice of virtual health care two decades ago as a way to reach isolated veterans, long before the pandemic made telehealth the preferred mode of treatment for many Americans.[15]<br><br>As we learned first-hand during the COVID-19 pandemic, many threats to health do not recognize national borders. With the rise of H5N1 and a resurgence in preventable diseases globally, including tuberculosis and measles, now more than ever before it is essential to support global public health initiatives for our collective wellbeing. Robust public health policies must prioritize continued participation in IGOs like the World Health Organization (WHO) to help strategize health-based interventions that benefit all communities. Global collaboration and partnership is fundamental to maintaining an accurate and comprehensive record of health data and research. This infrastructure supports real-time monitoring of disease outbreaks, allows partners to coordinate approaches, and enables timely interventions. Efforts to restrict or eliminate access to such data weaken the ability of health officials and researchers to track trends, predict risks, and implement solutions effectively. |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | Scientific research and funding for health studies drive advancements in medicine, technology, and public health interventions. Without adequate support for these initiatives, progress in addressing health disparities, developing new treatments, and improving healthcare access may be stalled. Additionally, it obscures data on AANHPI communities, adds hurdles to progress made on disaggregating data, and inequities continue to remain hidden and unaddressed in research and policy. Not only does it undermine evidence-based solutions, but it undermines the commitment to culturally competent care and hinders the development of programs that address systemic inequities as well. Ultimately, it marginalizes the lived experiences of NHPIs. |

# Education

Education is critical to accessing opportunity and to the success of many students, including AANHPI students and their families, across the country. Due to intersecting issues of race, ethnicity, poverty, language access, and immigration status, many AANHPI students struggle to connect to high-quality K-12, higher education, and career and technical education. Such struggles show up in high school graduation rates, the lack of college readiness, the inability to pay for rising college costs, as well as disparities across enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. These challenges are often masked by the model minority stereotype which assumes widespread, universal success by our community. This is why the U.S. Department of Education has played such a critical role in ensuring that targeted programs, culturally relevant supports, and financial resources reach AANHPI students.

Established in 1979, the Department of Education has run important elementary through post secondary education programs, including:

- Funding schools serving students from families with low income,
- Administering federal financial aid,
- Conducting research on data disaggregation, and
- Ensuring the protection and enforcement of civil rights laws in areas such as age, disability, race and ethnicity, and sex discrimination.

The following section discusses recent actions by the Administration that will negatively impact our students and that will continue to undermine the decades of progress that has been made for our communities in the field of education. The Administration's actions to abolish the Department of Education will lead to decreased critical federal investments, the removal of key agency functions, and will impact higher education programs including Minority Serving Institutions such as AANAPISIs.

- **A strong majority of AAPIs think that the federal government spends too little on key priorities, with education (64%) topping the list.[1]**

- **In K-12 settings, an estimated 90% of all students in the U.S. attend public schools which receive funding by the Department of Education through the states.[2] In the fall of 2022, 2.7 million students were Asian American and 182,000 were Pacific Islanders.[3]**

## Abolishing the U.S. Department of Education

On March 20th, the President issued and signed Executive Order 14242: *"Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities"*, directing the Secretary of the Department of Education to move forward with plans to dismantle key functions of the agency. This approach is not in line with the interests of AANHPI communities. **About 7 in 10 AAPIs oppose eliminating the Department of Education, and the issue of education remains a top issue priority.**

- **67% of AAPI adults oppose the elimination of the U.S. Department of Education.** [4]
- **According to Stop AAPI Hate's Righting Wrongs report, 36% of AAPIs say they experienced discrimination in school, with 52% of these survey respondents indicating the discrimination occurred in high school.**
- **Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students often face systemic barriers, including underrepresentation in advanced placement courses and extracurricular activities.**

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Effectively closing the Department of Education | As the Executive Order broadly calls on the Secretary to take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the agency and return authority to states and local communities, we anticipate long lasting effects to AANHPI students and families. This includes:<br>• Decreased funding and resources to deliver quality education programs and services to students; including the hiring and retention of high quality teachers.<br>• The limited operational capacity of the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) may cause disruptions in federal financial aid, student loan forgiveness, and payment programs that students and young professionals including AANHPIs rely on. |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | • Without enforcement mechanisms in place from the Office for Civil Rights, there will be less protections for AANHPI students against discrimination. This may also include fewer investigations such as in instances of denied disability accommodations, interventions related to student harassment, and fewer educational supports to ensure English Language Learner students have equal and meaningful access to education programs. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in ED is responsible for enforcing the federal civil rights laws that protect students from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin (including language), disability, sex, and age. OCR received a total of 22,687 complaints in fiscal year 2024 alone and will now have to operate with fewer staff.[5] The department is closing seven regional OCR offices, including San Francisco, Chicago, Dallas, Cleveland, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, by firing all staff in those offices. |

## Attacks on DEI Programs

Communications released by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights could potentially discourage Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and anything assumed to be categorized as such in public schools. The vague language may discourage education agencies from engaging in activities and functions that are essential for students in our communities. Depending on interpretations of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the following are some examples of engagement that schools could be punished for:

- Professional development trainings that focus on cultural competency.
- Inclusion of diverse perspectives in history advocated for in curriculum bills and ethnic studies curriculum.
- Use of resources such as lesson plans and books in the classroom that includes different identities.
- Supporting initiatives led by student affinity groups at colleges and universities.

**AAPIs oppose cuts to diversity and equity programs. A majority of AAPI adults oppose the elimination of federal funding to K-12 schools that teach about the ongoing impact of slavery and racism in America (65%), and do not support eliminating programs that broaden access to federal resources, policies and programs for AAPIs (66%).[6]**

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion in public schools by threatening school funding if they support efforts to support diverse students.<br><br>• Executive Order 13985: *"Ending Racial Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling"* | Losing diversity, equity, and inclusion programs designed to cultivate safe environments will impact the educational experiences of AANHPI students.<br><br>Forcing schools to create less diverse and inclusive spaces or risk losing federal funds is an authoritarian exercise in censorship and control. Such coercion is an effort to erase the existence of discrimination and racism.<br><br>Focusing on "patriotic education" barring the teaching of culturally diverse history undermines our community's ability to tell our story. For the AANHPI community, this might mean fewer opportunities for students to learn about their heritage. For example:<br><br>• A 2024 report highlighted that only 0.5% of U.S. history textbooks include significant coverage of Asian American contributions[7], despite the fact that AANHPI individuals make up approximately 7.2% of the U.S. population.[8] |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | • Studies show that seven in 10 AANHPIs support teaching historical topics such as slavery, racism, and segregation in K-12 schools – an identical share says the same about teaching the history of AANHPI communities. |

The Department also further required that states take action to certify compliance with its own interpretation of anti discrimination obligations in order to continue receiving federal financial support.[9] By undermining the critical work of education systems and threatening to take away key funding, schools will lose vital resources and classrooms will become less inclusive.

### THE POWER OF EDUCATING TO INCLUDE

**Sikhi (Sikhism) is the world's fifth-largest organized religion, with more than 500,000 adherents in the United States. When it comes to curriculum in schools, however, Sikhi is often left out or portrayed inaccurately—which can in turn lead to misrepresentations in the classroom and misunderstanding or ignorance by students and educators alike.**

**For Sikh students, the lack of visibility and cultural understanding impacts their experience at school: reports show that 78% of Sikh students experience bullying and harassment from their peers, and the severity and physicality of that bullying increases for students who maintain visible Sikh articles of faith like turbans. The Sikh Coalition is leading efforts to promote Sikh awareness in the classroom and prevent bias-based bullying in our nation's public schools by starting with the inclusion of Sikhi alongside other world religions and faith communities in state social studies standards. This is the first step to creating inclusive curricula that helps other students understand cultural diversity and learn about their classmates; so far, 20 states and Washington, DC, have moved to include Sikhi in this critical way.**

**Beyond standards work, the Sikh Coalition's other educational efforts include correcting errors about Sikhi in textbooks, designing lesson plans for students of different grade levels, working with Sikh authors to promote Sikh stories, training educators on how to teach about Sikhi in an accurate and constitutionally appropriate manner, and promoting anti-bullying policies.**

**All children deserve a safe and inclusive learning environment where they are empowered to be curious about their peers from other cultures, religions, and backgrounds in order to make the classroom a welcoming space for all.**

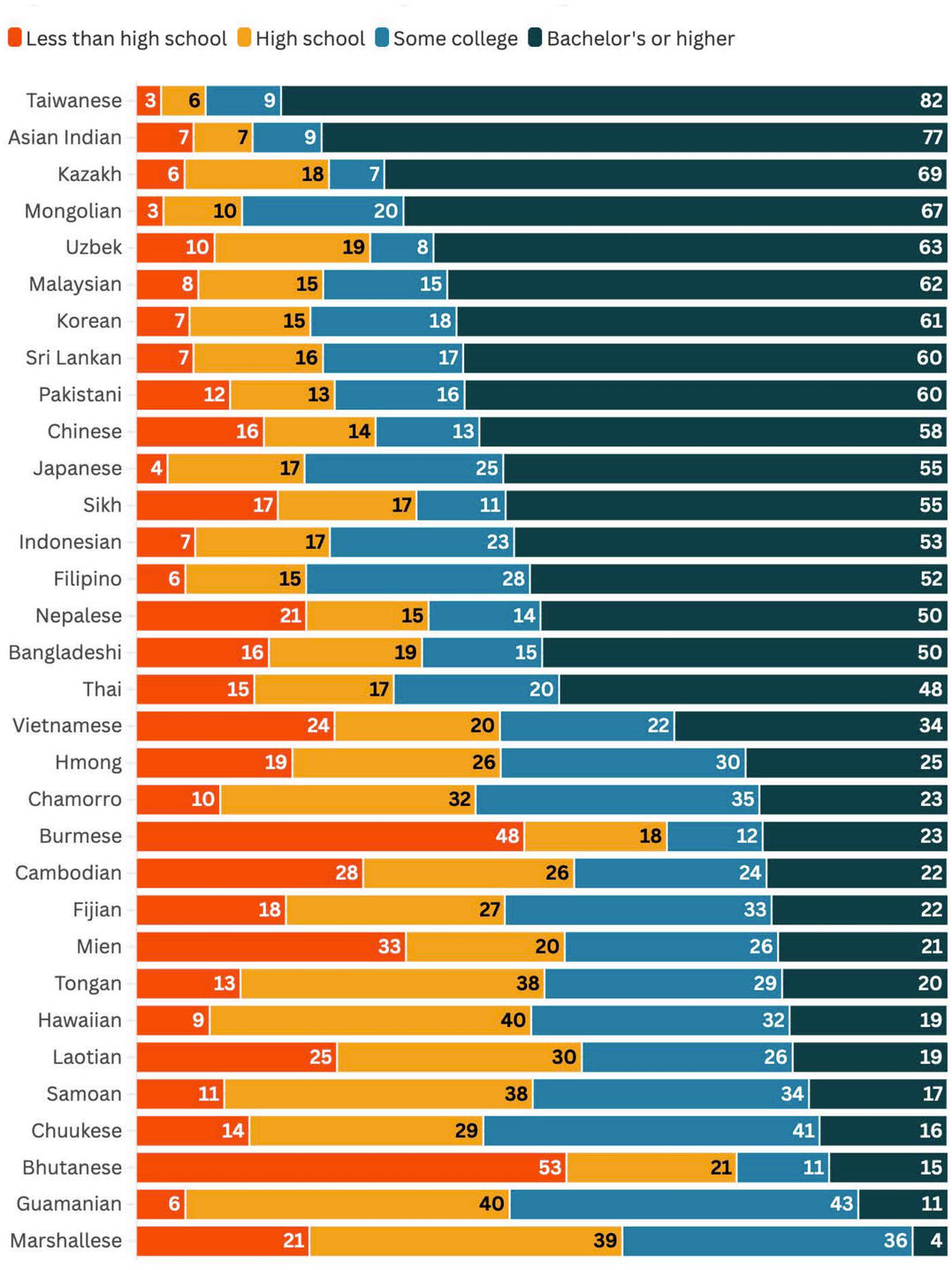
## Asian American, and Native American, Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)

Since 2007, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) across the United States, U.S. territories, and Compacts of Free Association (COFA) states have provided access to quality higher education opportunities for AANHPI students.

Through targeted programs, AANAPISIs ensure equitable educational access to AANHPI students, especially those from families with low income and who are first-generation. In 2024, 198 institutions were considered to be eligible for AANAPISI funding. Programmatic staff work to create supportive environments ensuring a greater sense of belonging for students. These include programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education in California, Washington, New York, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Virginia, American Samoa, Palau, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

AANHPI students are among the fastest-growing groups in U.S. higher education, with enrollment set to rise 12% in four years.[10] AANAPISIs play a crucial role in higher education – enrolling over 40% of all AANHPI undergraduates and awarding nearly half of their associate and bachelor's degrees – by providing essential support and improving college completion rates and economic mobility. [11]

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY DETAILED ORIGIN FOR AANHPIS




*Source: AAPI Data's analysis of the 2023 5-year American Community Survey via iPUMS*

Data shows that over 7 million Asian Americans and almost 70,000 NHPIs have a bachelor's degree or higher; these account for over 1 in 2 Asian Americans (57%), and about 1 in 5 NHPIs (19%). [12]

Among Asian Americans, the highest proportion of those with the lowest levels of educational attainment include Bhutanese, Burmese, Mien, and Cambodian. [13] Those with the highest level of educational attainment include Taiwanese, Asian Indian, Kazakh, and Mongolian.[14]

Among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, the highest proportion of those with the lowest levels of educational attainment include Marshallese. [15] Those with the highest level of educational attainment include Chamorro and Fijian.[16]

There are currently 54 federally funded AANAPISIs each providing critical services in areas including academic support, intervention models and retention programs, financial literacy training, pipeline mentoring for students and staff, and more.

Over 1.3 million Asian American and 111,000 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander undergraduate students receive financial aid, accounting for two thirds of Asian American students (66%) students and three quarters of NHPI students (74%).[17] A majority of this aid comes from federal sources.

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Defunding AANAPISIs would have severe consequences, leading to the loss of academic and career services that support thousands of AANHPI students. Critical programs such as mentorship, financial aid guidance, tutoring, and career counseling would be eliminated, disproportionately harming first-generation and low-income students. Faculty training on culturally responsive teaching would be reduced, leaving educators ill-equipped to support diverse classrooms. Student centers and learning spaces that foster belonging and academic success would face closures, affecting retention and engagement. Additionally, staff layoffs and institutional instability would further weaken resources, widening equity gaps and limiting opportunities for AANHPI students in higher education.

**AANAPISI funding significantly enhances student success by increasing retention and graduation rates among AANHPI students.** Programs that provide culturally tailored academic support have doubled student engagement, while career and STEM-focused initiatives have improved degree completion.

**Student centers offer vital spaces for belonging and mental health support,** addressing challenges that disproportionately affect first-generation and low-income students.

**Additionally, workforce development programs help thousands of students** access academic advising, mentoring, and employment opportunities, and strengthen leadership pipelines. With these proven outcomes, continued investment in AANAPISIs is essential for ensuring equitable access, persistence, and success in higher education.

"I AM A CHINESE-VIETNAMESE AMERICAN FROM CALIFORNIA, BORN TO TWO REFUGEES WHO FLED THE VIETNAM WAR. GROWING UP, I HAD LIMITED ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AS A LOWER-INCOME AAPI STUDENT. IT WASN'T UNTIL I ATTENDED IRVINE VALLEY COLLEGE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE—BOTH DESIGNATED ASIAN AMERICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (AANAPISIS)—THAT I FOUND A COMMUNITY THAT REFLECTED MY IDENTITY AND ASPIRATIONS.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE AANAPISI SCHOLARSHIP FROM THE WALMART FOUNDATION AND APIA SCHOLARS, I WAS ABLE TO FOCUS ON MY STUDIES WITHOUT THE WEIGHT OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP. THAT SUPPORT HELPED ME GRADUATE AT THE TOP OF MY CLASS WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND A MASTER'S IN PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE, AND ECONOMICS. IT ALSO EMPOWERED ME TO GIVE BACK, WORKING IN ASIAN AMERICAN POLICY ADVOCACY AS A FELLOW WITH OCA—ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN ADVOCATES.

TODAY, I AM PURSUING A LAW DEGREE AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, AN ENDEAVOR MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY FOSTERED BY AANAPISIS."

**JOSHUA TRAN, IRVINE VALLEY COLLEGE CLASS OF 2019 & UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IRVINE CLASS OF 2022**

“I AM CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING MY THIRD YEAR OF UNDERGRADUATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE PURSUING A DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE WHILE MINORING IN CRIMINOLOGY, LAW, AND SOCIETY. I ATTRIBUTE SO MUCH OF MY ABILITY TO THRIVE ACADEMICALLY THUS FAR TO THE SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOSTERED BY MY CAMPUS' INCLUSIVE STUDENT CLUBS, WIDE VARIETY OF SERVICES, AND AVAILABILITY OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CURRICULUM.

I AM CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING IN THE INCREDIBLE UCDC PROGRAM, WHICH ALLOWS ME TO SPEND A QUARTER OUT OF THE SCHOOL YEAR LIVING AND INTERNING IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THESE SPACES CONTINUE TO GIVE ME SPACE TO EXPLORE MY PERSONAL IDENTITIES, UNDERSTAND THE GREATER CONTEXTS OF COMMUNITIES AROUND ME, AND REAFFIRM MY COMMITMENT TO UPLIFT AANHPI COMMUNITIES' VOICES AND NEEDS THROUGH MY PLANS TO WORK IN ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC SERVICE.”

**SKYLER MURAO, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IRVINE CLASS OF 2026**

# Housing and Economic Justice

**Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are often overlooked in conversations about economic policy – but with $1.3 trillion in collective buying power and growing, their impact is undeniable.**[1] At the same time, AANHPI communities still face challenges in this economy in putting food on the table, obtaining affordable housing, and saving for retirement. In fact, income inequality across Asian Americans is greater than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States, and that gap is still widening.[2] Understanding how economic policy shifts impact AANHPIs is not just about equity, but recognizing a vital force in the United States economy.

There is work to be done to regain trust from AANHPI consumers and families that their elected representatives are working for their best interests. According to Stop AAPI Hate's April 2025 report, *Bracing for Impact*, only around 1 in 10 AANHPI adults believe racial and economic challenges will decrease for AANHPI communities under the Trump administration.[3]

As the Trump Administration has pursued its economic agenda, American families are suffering and struggling to navigate the self-inflicted crisis created by an unpredictable trade war. Trillions of dollars in household wealth have been destroyed as the stock markets become increasingly volatile. The cost of living for communities remains high and it is unclear what the future may hold.

## RECENT DATA SHOWS...

- **AANHPIs disapprove of the current handling of the economy:**
  A strong majority of AAPIs (71%) disapprove of how the Trump Administration is handling the economy.

- **Community Priorities:**
  3 in 10 AAPI Adults cited inflationand the economy as top issues.

- **1 in 9 Asian Americans and 1 in 6 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. live in poverty:**
  This amounts to over 2 million Asian Americans and 89,000 NHPIs who qualify for many essential government programs.

- **AAPIs experience poverty at higher levels than other demographics:**
  Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders experienced poverty rates of 11 percent and 17.6 percent, respectively, compared to an 8.15% poverty rate for white, non-Hispanic people.

For example, tariffs on lumber are estimated to increase the cost of a single-family home by $75,000 to $100,000; and a 25% tariff on imported automobiles and parts would translate to an 8% increase in the costs of cars and parts. Estimates show that this would mean new car prices could jump by $10,000. Imposing tariffs on life saving drugs will increase the cost of healthcare for AANHPIs. Estimates indicate that such tariffs placed on pharmaceutical imports would raise prices for more affordable generic drugs by $0.12 per pill or an additional $42 per year.

With 37% of Asian Americans often worrying about not being able to cover an unexpected medical expense, needy families cannot afford an increase in prices that these new policies create. Tariffs are also expected to raise the prices of imported goods and products that can be found at Asian grocery stores such as rice, spices, and frozen seafood.

Over the last six years, food prices have risen 31% while wages remain stagnant, and for everyday Americans, this means a struggle to make ends meet. Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are feeling the impact of inflation like many others in their day-to-day lives, with two-thirds of AANHPI adults reporting they experienced an increase in household expenses in the last year.[4] Asian Americans often worry about not being able to retire when they want due to their finances and being able to provide adequate support for their aging family members. A majority of AAPIs believe that the government should prioritize addressing the high cost of food and housing.

All of these factors, combined with the administration's decision to destroy important regulatory and housing agencies leaves communities facing greater uncertainty at greater risk of being taken advantage of, and ultimately in an economy that is not working for them.

## Undermining the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was established following the financial crisis of 2008, which cost American families an estimated $16 trillion, as millions of jobs and homes were lost. Tasked with strengthening oversight and enforcement on financial institutions, the CFPB has returned over $21 billion to families defrauded by banks, credit card companies, mortgage lenders, and student loan lenders. AANHPI families have benefitted from CFPB actions as parts of the community have always been prime targets for predatory lenders and scams looking to exploit limited English speakers.

Despite the significant impact and protection this agency has provided to Americans, critics of the Bureau have argued that overregulation has resulted in less consumer choice and higher costs. Numerous private lawsuits as well as legislative efforts by some in Congress have been filed since the CFPB began operations in 2010.

In February 2025, the Trump Administration announced that the work of the CFPB would be halted, as they indicated they would not take additional funds for operations, and signaled a plan to sell the CFPB's headquarters. More recently, the administration fired neary all of CFPB's staff. Since the targeting of the agency, lawsuits against big banks and technology companies have been dropped, investigations have stopped, and stakeholder engagement has ceased.

- **69% of AAPIs oppose the elimination of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.**
- **According to the AARP, nearly four in ten (39 percent) Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) age 50 and older report that they or their family members have experienced fraud schemes.**

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| • Dismantling the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau | Shutting down the CFPB would mean:<br>• Effectively shutting down the CFPB removes the only consumer-first regulatory and enforcement agency overseeing the banking sector. Other bank regulators' primary responsibility is the safety and soundness of the institution–not everyday Americans.<br>• Corporate pardons for bad actors. Pending enforcement lawsuits filed by the CFPB have been dismissed, including lawsuits against big banks, student loan lenders, online payment systems, and mortgage lenders. This sends a clear message that it is open season for predatory lenders and scammers and American consumers must fend for themselves.<br>• Pending and future rulemaking is halted indefinitely. This means the financial sector is effectively free to develop new profit-generating practices at the expense of families and consumers with little accountability.<br>• Students, first-time homebuyers, veterans, and immigrants will all face the daunting task of navigating a complex financial system with less protection. As a result, they will be more likely to be defrauded and taken advantage of.<br>• Examples of scams, fraud, and practices the CFPB can no longer protect against:<br>  ▪ Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank and others caught opening millions of unauthorized accounts on behalf of customers without their consent.<br>  ▪ Zelle, the peer-to-peer payment system, ignored widespread fraud that resulted in nearly $1 billion in stolen funds from users. |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | ■ Navient and numerous student loan lenders have been held accountable for fraud resulting in hundreds of billions of dollars being returned to students.<br>■ With the CFPB consumer complaint portal taken down, one of the primary ways American consumers can communicate and raise concerns with the government is gone. |

## Gutting the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The U.S. Department for Housing and Urban Development was founded in the 1960s and is tasked with overseeing and managing a number of critical housing programs. The Department's functions include:

- Operating affordable housing and homelessness programs, including multifamily housing, supportive housing for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- Mortgage insurance through the Federal Housing Administration to support homeownership and affordability.
- Section 8 housing vouchers and public housing for low income families.
- Enforcement of fair housing laws.

The Department plays a key role in community development and affordable housing, administering billions of dollars to cities and municipalities and overseeing programs that provide direct support to low income families.

Major changes have been proposed to HUD as part of the Trump Administration's broader effort to overhaul the government and find savings for other priorities, like tax cuts. Some of these changes include, freezing funds to HUD, including existing contracts with affordable housing developers or firing thousands of HUD employees.

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| Reorganization of HUD:<br>● Freeze funding for affordable housing development, housing vouchers for low income families, supportive housing for elders and people with disabilities.<br>● Eliminate thousands of HUD jobs (roughly 50 percent of the workforce).<br>● Close dozens of offices in 34 states and DC.<br>● Gut the Federal Housing Administration, which provides important stability to the mortgage market.<br>● Halting the enforcement of fair housing laws. | The impact on families from these actions taken by the Trump Administration would be catastrophic:<br>● Freezing Section 8 funding would jeopardize rental assistance for millions of low-income Americans. Being unable to pay their rent would mean eviction, displacement and possible homelessness for these families.<br>● Halting community development funds would directly impact states and cities redevelop vacant lots of land, manage foreclosed properties, and rebuild communities.<br>■ Cancelled awards included projects in more than 1,000 communities aimed to address homelessness, disaster relief, poverty, and other housing issues.<br>● Jeopardize the health and safety of seniors and people with disabilities who rely on HUD programs for supportive housing.<br>● Removing fair housing enforcement would allow housing discrimination to proliferate.<br>■ The Trump Administration has argued that fair housing laws and rules are red tape that should be removed, but these are meaningful protections for Americans who can be targeted by discrimination. This could result in a return to redlining for communities of color.<br>● Cutting the workforce of the agency that is responsible for all of these important programs essentially ensures these programs will run less efficiently, and therefore leave Americans worse off.<br>● HUD is responsible for administering billions of dollars to support affordable housing and rent. Creating desperation and poverty harms entire communities, not just individuals and families. |

## Small Businesses and Access to Credit

There is grave concern that administrative actions to roll back bipartisan support for civil and human rights, increase the cost of imported goods for everyday Americans, and gutting regulatory agencies will have a tremendous economic impact on the United States. While well established corporations with deep financial reserves might be able to weather the storm, small businesses have narrow margins to turn a profit, and rising costs add financial strain to family-run operations.

**According to the National Asian Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce, nearly 3 million AAPI-owned firms created 5 million jobs and contributed more than $1 trillion in economic output in 2021.**

For small businesses, access to capital is a vital component for success. For AANHPI entrepreneurs, obtaining loans is the biggest concern with running a business, whether it is due to lack of relationships with financial institutions and insufficient credit history.[5] Systemic barriers still exist: studies have shown that on average, when it comes to obtaining loans, Asian American-owned businesses still face bias and discrimination, and are charged higher interest rates. Lenders were more likely to require an outside co-signer on loans to Asian American-owned businesses than their white-owned counterparts.[6]

These disparities in obtaining loans reflect historical patterns of discrimination, and underscore the work that needs to be done to level the playing field and ensure that Asian American small business owners have an equal chance at economic success as their white-owned counterparts.

- **Asian American-owned businesses on average have interest rates 2.88% higher than white-owned ones.**
- **Asian American, Black, and Hispanic owned businesses on average pay $8 billion more in annual interest than white-owned ones.**

# Destruction of Civil Society

Over the last four months, the Trump Administration has instituted sweeping changes to the federal government, ranging from laying off thousands of government employees and shutting down agencies to testing the limits of the separation of powers outlined in the Constitution. While a tremendous amount of authority is granted to the Executive Branch, this should not be conflated as granting the President, or his administration the authority to ignore the rule of law, legal precedent and court mandates.

Congressional and judicial oversight are key pillars to our democracy, yet it appears increasingly evident that the Trump Administration intends to, at best, test the limits of their power, and at worst, ignore them entirely.

Elected officials from both major parties often invoke the importance of the rule of law, and the importance of transparency as a key condition of democracy. And it is for this reason, that the actions of the Trump Administration are incredibly alarming.

## Mass Civil Servant Firings and Termination of Grants

The Administration's actions to significantly reduce the size of the federal workforce by gutting programs, instituting the layoffs of thousands of federal workers, and rescinding federal grants will continue to have drastic and devastating impacts for the federal workforce and the communities they serve. Despite court orders, the Administration continues to push its bounds of legal authority and advance its efforts to dismantle critical federal services that support the needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

The federal government creates millions of jobs with nearly 3 million employees who are non-enlisted civilians. Thousands of federal employees have been laid off as a result of the Administration's targeted and coordinated efforts to disrupt the federal government - including the federal workforce. Under the guise of government efficiency, federal programs that regularly provide health, housing, safety net support, and disaster relief to AANHPIs families and communities across the country have been affected including the staff that operate them.

**Closing offices and key functions of the federal government will prevent programs from running.** Reductions in the federal workforce have resulted in the following job losses across government agencies. Federal grants have also been terminated.

- **Mass layoffs at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**
  - Between 1,600-2000 jobs across the agency

- **Mass layoffs at the U.S. Department of Education**
  - At least 240 jobs at the Office of Civil Rights
  - More than 450 jobs at the Office of Federal Student Aid
  - 100 jobs at the Institute of Education Sciences

- **Mass layoffs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
  - 3,500 jobs at the Food and Drug Administration
  - 2,400 jobs at the Centers for Disease Control
  - 1,200 jobs at the National Institutes of Health
  - 300 jobs at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
    - Including 40 jobs at the CMS Office of Minority Health
  - 100 jobs at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
  - 100 jobs at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

- **Mass layoffs at the Federal Emergency Management System (FEMA)**
  - More than 200 jobs located within FEMA headquarters and across regional offices

- **The Department of Justice has cancelled at least 365 grants to community based organizations and local governments focused on a range of initiatives and services including gun-violence prevention, programs directed towards identifying community-based approaches to preventing hate crimes against Arab, Jewish, and Asian Americans, and support hotlines. The Trump Administration is also reportedly planning to close the Community Relations Service, an office created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to convene law enforcement and local communities in cities across the nation to facilitate peaceful resolutions to conflict and provide rapid response support to hate violence.**

- **A majority (76%) agree that Elon Musk, the head of the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), has too much influence on the U.S. federal government and are largely opposed to the cuts to federal agencies that DOGE has either made or proposed.**

In addition to following through with recommendations by DOGE, the Administration took actions to roll out its mass civil servant firings. These included the rescission of Executive Order 14035: "*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce*", Executive Order 14170: "*Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service*", and "*Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Workforce Optimization Initiative*".

The federal workforce consists of an estimated 3 million employees across the U.S. In 2025, it has been estimated that layoffs will likely rise to 245% and already has resulted in the loss of nearly 62,000 jobs in Washington, DC alone.[1]

AANHPI workers accounted for 7.1% of the federal workforce in comparison to 5.7% of the civilian labor force.[2] As of March, an estimated 280,253 layoffs have taken place across 27 federal agencies in a span of two months.[3] When considering the top five states with the largest AANHPI populations, these states and the number of federal employees within each include CA (254,311), NY (128, 682), TX (247,738), NJ (55,919) and WA (77,844). Of the federal workforce, about 7.5% are AANHPIs.[4]

These mass firings will roll back the progress made in hiring qualified AANHPIs and ensuring investments in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts that encourage and lead to diverse workforces - including workers who understand and reflect the diversity and uniqueness of our communities. Continued layoffs will result in the scaling back of critical services such as implementing health programs, monitoring typhoons and hurricanes, and administering student aid.

**Lack of Support for DOGE: AAPI adults show little support for major changes to the federal workforce either somewhat opposing or strongly opposing the elimination of entire federal agencies (57%) compared to those who strongly or somewhat favor (12%). Additionally, AANHPIs do not support eliminating a large number of federal jobs (45%). A majority of AAPIs neither favor or oppose moving federal agencies outside of Washington D.C. (51%).[5]**

## Weaponizing the Judiciary and Legal System

The Administration has issued a series of orders and memoranda aimed towards intimidating members of civil society including targeting the judiciary system by calling out law firms that the Administration has considered to be acting in conflict with the Administration's agenda.

Combined with the President's statements calling for the impeachment of at least one federal judge who issued a temporary halt on the Administration's deportation efforts, attacks on the judicial system remain rampant. In a memo issued to the Attorney General titled, "Preventing Abuses of the Legal System and the Federal Court", the Administration claims to identify the various ways in which law firms operate based on fraud. Such firms, including those working on civil rights related cases and providing pro bono services, have been offering much needed legal representation especially on behalf of individuals who need support navigating complex and unfair systems including immigration, housing, and justice systems.

In response to being targeted by the Administration, certain law firms are making concessions such as agreeing to dedicate between $40 to $100 million worth of pro bono services to support the Administration on issues pertaining to countering antisemitism, hiring practice audits, preventing the adoption of diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, representation without regard to client's political affiliation, and others.

President Trump has also called on the Attorney General to further scrutinize lawyers and provide referrals for disciplinary action based on those the Administration deems to be working against their interests. Such assaults on the legal system will continue to create chilling effects leading to the unchecked power and lack of accountability of the Executive Branch. Rather than promoting the foundations of democracy and ensuring key functions of our federal government through the judicial branch, such actions will lead to the silencing of critics and delegitimize critical institutions.

**TARGETING OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

**The Trump Administration has targeted nonprofit organizations who have received federal funds under allegations of fraud. There is also anticipation of further attacks on the nonprofit sector through executive actions potentially in areas focused on education, criminal justice reform, immigration, the environment, and others. Additionally, the House of Representatives has previously passed a bill that would grant the Executive Branch broad authority to strip the 501(c)(3) status of organizations if they were deemed connected to terrorist activity–a definition that would be set by the Executive Branch, itself.**

**Finally, within the broader immigrant rights space, there is growing anecdotal evidence that suggests that certain nonprofit leaders may be targeted by federal authorities–regardless of immigration status.**

## Firing of Inspector Generals and Office of Special Counsel

The Administration has sought to weaken independent key functions of the federal government by illegally firing leadership, removing critical personnel, and placing political pressure on the key operations of such roles and independent agencies. Such independent agencies are housed within the executive branch of the federal government established to protect the well-being of all Americans. As they are not within the president's authority or control, such functions help to protect against corruption and government mismanagement.

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| • Firing Inspector Generals (IGs) across 17 different federal agencies.<br><br>• Firing the head of the Office of Special Counsel. | IGs are independent public service employees tasked with examining fraud, abuse, misconduct, and inefficiencies within agencies. Their roles are intended to protect taxpayer funds and they are meant to act independently from the president. Such firings are legally questionable; but are absolutely a threat to necessary government oversight.<br><br>The Office of Special Counsel is where federal workers and whistleblowers can report wrongdoing and corruption. Without independent oversight, ethics violations will continue to occur and the credibility of the government will be further eroded.<br><br>More specifically, without the protections of Inspector Generals:<br><br>The Office of Special Counsel is where federal workers and whistleblowers can report wrongdoing and corruption. Without independent oversight, ethics violations will continue to occur and the credibility of the government will be further eroded.<br><br>More specifically, without the protections of Inspector Generals:<br><br>• There are limited processes or systems in place to investigate actions by the Executive Branch such as misconduct by the Administration and/or within federal agencies.<br><br>• Limits the ability of independent offices within federal agencies to investigate corruption, fraud, waste, and mismanagement.<br><br>• Few to no investigations of potential ethics violations or conflicts of interests will take place including–spending federal funds on unauthorized uses, misusing positions to benefit family members, relying on government employees for personal matters and lying to investigators.<br><br>Without an independent Office of Special Counsel:<br><br>• Oversight and investigations of corruption, fraud, and waste within and across the federal government will be limited. There will be less protections in place for federal workers from illegal actions. |

## Erasure of Historical Records

The President fired the National Archivist, who is the head and Chief Administrator of the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA). NARA became a part of the criminal case filed against him for mishandling classified information in 2022, though the National Archivist fired was not leading the agency at the time.

NARA is tasked with public engagement and information management which includes retaining records that document community and individual histories such as on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. NARA is responsible for preserving and providing access to government records. Topics of record include immigration enforcement and exclusion, the experiences of Nikkei during WWII, language barriers in previous Census data, among others. By firing the previous National Archivist without plans for a permanent replacement, the Administration has taken steps towards deprioritizing the continued documentation and preservation of important histories and records.

### ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**Asian & Pacific Islanders in Historic Preservation (APIAHiP) is the only national organization dedicated to protecting historic places and cultural resources significant to Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. For APIAHiP, federal institutions and support is a vital part of ensuring the shared histories of the AANHPI community in the United States is known and celebrated.**

**In the first 100 days, APIAHiP and their colleagues at the local, state, and national levels have seen the unrelenting dismantling of federal institutions that protect our arts, culture, heritage, and history. Attacks on the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Park Service (NPS), and National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) have gone far beyond rhetoric—resulting in mass layoffs, rescinded grants, shuttered programs, and erased records.**

**For AANHPI communities, this isn't theoretical—it means cancelled exhibits, unfunded oral histories, disappearing archives, and lost opportunities to tell our stories on our terms. Arts, culture, heritage, and history are not just critical aspects of our communities—they are existential and irrevocable material elements that make up our communities. They are the buildings we gather in, the languages we speak, the names on the plaques, and the memories passed down. These federal agencies are not optional—they are the scaffolding of cultural survival, education, and justice. Dismantling them is not just policy—it is cultural erasure in real time.**

Members on a historic tour of Chinatown

## DOGE Violating the Privacy Rights of Americans

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is not an official agency led by a Secretary, or authorized by law. Instead, it is a handpicked group headed by billionaire Elon Musk. The exact membership and their exact roles are still not clear and current lawsuits are attempting to obtain this information as well as DOGE's scope. Despite these concerns, the employees of DOGE have reportedly accessed the personal information of Americans at the Treasury Department and other agencies with no oversight or privacy protections, and without obtaining any clearances. It is still unknown if any of this data was copied or edited though there are early indications on some of the purposes of such access including DOGE's interest in USCIS' electronic immigration data. The exchange of such private data and personal information between agencies, including the Department of Treasury and DHS, could further jeopardize AANHPI immigrants.

This overstep is a clear violation of the Privacy Act of 1974. The Act states that agencies cannot disclose personal information to anyone without the written permission of the individual whose information is at issue. There was no consent given, nor any attempt to obtain any from the millions of Americans in the Treasury's system. An unelected bureaucrat should not be given access to and power over the personal information of Americans and steps must be taken to make sure it does not happen again.

Historic civil rights groups representing the AANHPI community have already jumped into action to challenge this constitutional overreach. In early March, the Japanese Americans Citizens League (JACL) and OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates sued Elon Musk and DOGE and filed a lawsuit challenging that neither have the lawful authority to take control of and dismantle federal agencies and funding systems or fire federal workers.[6]

These actions must be halted pending judicial review, and clarity on what information was accessed and to what extent must be made public.

# Environment

Poor and working class communities, as well as AANHPIs, are already feeling the impact of our changing environment. Extreme weather is occurring with increasing regularity as sea levels rise and catastrophic weather events are reshaping the world. From wildfires in Hawaii and California, to increasingly harmful flooding across the U.S., AANHPI communities are amongst those communities who are bearing the brunt of decisions from policymakers and those who continue to refuse to take action, despite overwhelming evidence.

**Almost 80% of AAPIs believe that climate change has or will have a major impact in their lifetime. 35% of AAPI adults indicated that climate change has already had a major impact on them personally, and 43% believe climate change will have a major impact in their lifetime.[1]**

The cost of environmental disasters are growing exponentially and oftentimes, the individual stories and experiences of loss and grief are easy to ignore when damage has reached a scale that is difficult to comprehend. For AANHPI communities with lower income, limited access to resources following such disasters may include lack of insurance, housing, difficulties in recovery efforts, and displacement. According to AAPI Data, AAPI adults are more likely to say that climate change has had or will have a major impact on their lives or health. Furthermore, about 6 in 10 AAPI adults support government aid in the wake of climate disasters.[2]

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
|---|---|
| Reorganization:<br>● Firing 15 percent of NOAA's workforce.<br>● Cutting billions of dollars from NOAA's budget.<br>● Deregulating long standing regulations around clean air and water.<br>● Cutting billions of dollars in research and support grants administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). | The Trump Administration has made clear that one of its priorities is to cut climate change research and reduce the federal workforce of agencies who are leading and funding this important work.<br><br>As with other agencies noted in this report, reducing the workforce of agencies and offices that are tasked with researching, monitoring, and preparing for climate disasters will have catastrophic consequences. Extreme weather forecasting and other disaster preparedness will likely be compromised, and ending research into climate change will upend decades of important work. For context, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Center on Environmental Information estimates that in 2024, climate disasters cost over $182 billion and caused at least 568 fatalities.[3] |

| TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ACTION(S) | IMPACT |
| --- | --- |
| | Communities will be additionally impacted as billions of dollars in investments focused on building modernization, rehabilitation, and weatherization is also being cut by the EPA. The Trump Administration's efforts to terminate financial agreements under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund has temporarily halted what promises to be a transformative federal program bringing together community, public and private entities to catalyze economic development, promote clean energy, and improve health outcomes for those most impacted by climate change. Through this program, community-serving financial institutions would have had the ability to leverage significant private investment to support community-led efforts that spur new business growth and workforce development opportunities, as well as bring sorely needed resources to support development of innovative projects such as community-owned solar and energy efficient new and rehabilitated affordable housing and commercial spaces. Over 26% of AAPI communities were qualified to benefit under the program's targeted investments to Justice40 communities.[4]<br><br>The Trump Administration has championed rolling back clean air and water regulations as the “greatest day of deregulation our nation has seen.” In reality, these decisions will only further drive climate disasters, while jeopardizing the health, safety, and well-being of Americans and their future generations. |

# Conclusion

The first 100 days of the Trump Administration have made it clear that sweeping federal actions can have profound consequences for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. From rollbacks in civil rights protections, increasing obstacles to healthcare access, and harmful immigration policies, the Administration's agenda has deepened existing disparities and made many in the AANHPI community more vulnerable.

Yet, amid these challenges, the resilience and power of AANHPIs continue to grow. AANHPIs are among the fastest-growing racial demographics in the nation. With over 24 million people, holding over a trillion dollars in buying power, our communities' influence is rapidly growing and we demand to be heard and seen. Policymakers must recognize that addressing the needs of the AANHPI community is a matter of equity, democracy, and economic strategy.

This is a serious moment where far-reaching executive orders have tangible and immediate impacts that aim to reshape America. In response to this, AANHPI advocates are organizing, educating, and mobilizing communities to advocate for our best interests. This report is a resource for those answering the call to action, and a reminder that when our communities are seen, considered, and empowered, we all can collectively thrive.

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