



ASIAN PACIFIC POLICY & PLANNING COUNCIL

Recalling our Democracy

For the second time in recent history, we in California are determining whether a duly elected governor should be removed from office by an extremely small fraction of eligible voters in an off-election year. In essence, we are deciding whether America's experiment with democracy lives on.

Democracy is a fragile thing. For most of U.S. history, it has been no more than an aspiration. In fact, America's multiracial democracy only became a potential reality with the Civil Rights movement in the 1950's, the Immigration Act and Voting Rights Act of 1965. Today, we feel our nation's democracy and the possibility of attaining a more perfect union slipping through our fingers. 2021, in addition to a pandemic, has seen more deliberate efforts to eviscerate our democracy than at any other time in our lives. In multiple states, we have experienced not only gerrymandering and voter suppression efforts (again); we have witnessed legislation to nullify elections outright.

Many in California have believed that we were immune from this. We have a nonpartisan redistricting commission to draw fair lines. We have no legislation seeking to prevent young people, people of color or low-income individuals from voting. There were no efforts made to violate the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But today, we have efforts in place to recall our democratically majority-elected governor.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders continue to make up a relatively small percentage of the California and American population. Statewide, we make up 16-17%; in the US, only 5.7%. But we are mighty. In 2017, our vote made up the margins of victory for candidates for governor in Virginia and New Jersey. In 2020, our vote made the difference in a number of key races in California and in the senatorial runoffs in Georgia.

In 2020 and 2021, Asian Americans and some Pacific Islanders experienced numerous acts of hate related to COVID-19. Stop AAPI Hate, an organization co-founded by A3PCON, reported in August that it had received over 9000 incident reports from all 50 states and the District of Columbia since March 2020. The anti-Asian hate directed at AAPI women, at our elders and our children has caused significant trauma and pain. But it has also turned up the heat in our community's activism - and encouraged many of us to raise our collective voice, sometimes for the first time.

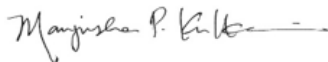
In doing this work, I have been heartened by our Stop AAPI Hate survey results showing that so many who have reported to our reporting center have shared their

stories because they wanted to engage civically; they wanted to see change in our country. I was incredibly moved by all of the monolingual and multilingual ammas and appas and aajumas and harabeojis in Koreatown who came out against hate in a rally co-hosted by Korean American Federation of Los Angeles and A3PCON member Koreatown Youth and Community Center in March.

Our community members need to continue to come out – not only to voice our opposition against hate, but also for our support of community safety, equity in schools, civil rights and public health -- with easy access to COVID vaccines and requirements for masks. It is not only the AAPI community's well-being that is at risk with the recall. It is the very future of American democracy and everything our communities has worked towards.

Please make plans to vote between now and September 14. Similar to the last election, ballots were mailed to all registered voters and should have been received by now this week. For those wanting to vote in-person, voter centers have been set up across LA County.

Because this is a special recall election, the ballot will be unfamiliar to most voters. We hope that this one-pager from our friends at the League of Women Voters California will help make sure they understand what to expect. Check out our voting rights resources page for translated versions in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Khmer, Korean, and Vietnamese, as well as flyers on language access for voting for those languages.



Manju Kulkarni
Executive Director



Rachele Arizmendi
Chair, Board of Directors

A Legend Retires



After 46 years of advocating for education and prevention efforts around substance and tobacco use, Dr. Michael “Mike” Watanabe has retired. His legacy and unparalleled work around substance abuse and trauma in AAPI communities have saved countless lives by creating avenues for safe housing, outpatient and rehabilitative services, intervention and youth mentoring programs, employment

opportunities and prevention programs that began when he returned from the two and a half years in the U.S. army and realized the impact drugs and alcohol were having on his communities and his fellow veterans’.

Mike began work at Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP) in 1975 as a counselor in the Therapeutic Community department, a mere 3 years into its founding. Of the 46 years he spent at AADAP, 39 were spent as head of the organization. Under his tenure, the agency grew from a small grassroots organization with 20 staff to a large, comprehensive service agency with over 120 professional staff serving a significant portion of Los Angeles County through ten service sites.

In addition to his work at AADAP, Mike served as board president of A3PCON and chaired its Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Committee for twelve years and is a founding board member of National Asian Pacific Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA). He also served as a commissioner for the Los Angeles County Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission and the Asian and Pacific Islander Constituent Committee as advisor to the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (DADP) for sixteen and eight years, respectively.

Mike's commitment to bettering the lives of our AAPI youth and community members has had a profound impact on generations. The traumas we carry from migration, racism, mental health struggles, violence and lack of resources, employment and community support continue to exist and it is because of Mike and his decades of work that there are opportunities for our community to have more.

"It's rare to have a community leader commit to a cause so deeply that they spend a lifetime both growing the roots and tending the fruits of their labor. Mike's cellular understanding of the root causes of substance use and abuse has made him a tremendous visionary and leader. His contributions have saved and supported countless people and significantly improved the possibility of healthier communities in Southern California." -- **Manju Kulkarni**, *A3PCON Executive Director*

Honoring Thai CDC

A3PCON is beyond proud to share that Thai CDC was recently selected as the 2021 California Nonprofit of the Year by Assemblymember Laura Friedman of the State of California!

Jan Masaoka, CEO of the California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits) explains "California Nonprofit of the Year is an opportunity for our elected officials to celebrate the good work they see nonprofits doing in their districts, and for everyone to appreciate the collective impact of nonprofits in our communities."

During the pandemic, Thai CDC has continued the vital work to render aid, relief and critical services to the community with COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics, cash assistance, food vouchers, food and produce distributions, and PPE. Thai CDC has also continued to provide legal and social services, business counseling, healthcare access, affordable housing efforts, and their farmers' market in East Hollywood.





Chancee Martorell, Thai CDC Executive Director, accepts the Nonprofit of the Year award from 43rd district CA Assembly member Laura Friedman

Redistricting Meetings

You still have a chance to offer public comment, submit testimony, draw your community and submit your suggestions to [LA City](#), [LA County](#), and [CA State Redistricting Commissions](#)! **Why is this important?**

When the U.S. Census Bureau releases the data collected in the 2020 Decennial Census, electoral districts will be redrawn in the state of California (and everywhere that has districts). This process is called Redistricting, and it occurs to balance the populations in each district based on the Census data - which dictates funding, resources and legislative influence for the communities that live in the districts.

Most states give the power of redrawing legislative and congressional districts to the state legislature. Some states, like California, conduct redistricting differently. In 2008, California voters passed the [Voters First Act](#). The Voters First Act mandates the creation of an independent Commission to redraw district lines.

UPCOMING REDISTRICTING MEETINGS

Los Angeles City - Meeting Agenda September 11, 2021

The next LA City Council Redistricting Commission meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 11, 2021 at 10:00 AM (PST)**. Agenda notes can be found above.

Los Angeles County - Meeting Agenda September 14, 2021

The next LA County Citizens Redistricting Commission (LAC CRC) Meeting will be held **Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM (PST)** both virtually and at the Patriotic Hall (1816 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015). Agenda notes can be found above.

California State - Meeting Agenda September 8, 2021

The next Citizens Redistricting Commission regular meeting will be **Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 3:00 PM (PST)**. Agenda notes can be found above.

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The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) is a coalition of community-based organizations that advocates for the rights and needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in the greater Los Angeles area with particular focus on low income, immigrant, refugee and other disadvantaged sectors of the population. We set up this mailing list to keep you updated on API related issues. This includes community announcements, key news items, resources, and training. We will send you no more than 5 messages a month.

Our mailing address is:

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