

**February 11, 2009 - Testimony of Alan C. Tan**  
**Before the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly**

Good afternoon, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Alan Tan, President of the Asian American Students Association at the University of Connecticut, President and Chief Executive Officer of TAG2000 International LLC, and a resident of the Town of Rocky Hill.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to voice my concern regarding the loss of funding behind the commission recently enacted by Public Act 08-166, An Act to Create an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission.

This commission, along with the other commissions to serve other underserved minorities here in the State of Connecticut, is essential and necessary to ensure that State Government serves who it is here to serve, the population of the great state of Connecticut. It is important to encourage more people to get involved in government, and to make sure that the resources that we have allocated as a state to serve the functions of the state get to the people who need it the most. Today's economy underscores why this is important today, and a commission such as the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission could make it easier to reach out to these targeted populations.

In order to underscore my point, it was much more difficult to start TAG2000 International LLC because I had to overcome significant obstacles within my hometown. People have underlying assumptions as part of the majority culture that isn't readily available to minorities. Minorities need help to integrate successfully into a majority community. They need help to make sure they are on the right track. By providing help in the form of commissions, more individuals can be empowered to start businesses quicker and realize their dreams. In essence, you are translating your fastest growing minority populations into new tax base dollars.

This example proves useful for my next point as well. I understand that the state is under a very large budget crisis. So are, as Governor Rell stated in her address, numerous Connecticut families. Every individual who lives and works in this state has to make do with less. However, when we answer the question, how much less do we make do with as a state, we can't solely focus on the money. Sure, we can save a little money now by eliminating all the commissions that reach out to the minorities. However, we have to take a look at the long term consequences of doing so. I believe the long term consequences of eliminating funding for this commission are much more severe than just leaving the commission with enough funding to do its job.

If the commission is allowed to stay and do its job, and a few new businesses pay taxes to the State because of it, you will have helped all of us as a state to rebuild our economy after this economic mess of 2008. I implore you to do so, as small businesses are the critical drivers to our economy's renewed growth.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.