

## **Governor Proposes Budget Detrimental to All Commissions**

Testimony by Heang Tan  
West Hartford, Connecticut

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my written testimony to support the Asian American Affairs Commission of Connecticut ("The Commission"). My name is Heang Tan, and my family and I came here refugees from Cambodia and I've been a Connecticut resident since 1982. I currently work in the field of health equity.

I am writing to oppose the dissolution of the Asian American Affairs Commission of Connecticut. The Commission represents the fastest growing community in Connecticut; which is broken down into four geographically-based groups: (1) Pacific Islanders (2) Southeast Asians (3) East Asians and (4) South Asians.

Each sub group has unique cultures and issues and The Commission is well positioned to represent each community in a culturally and linguistically manner. For instance, health disparities disproportionately affect refugee groups such as Cambodians, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Burmese, while violence and school bullying impact other groups disproportionately. These issues are carefully monitored and addressed by the Commission's two-person staff and volunteer Commissioners.

Being a refugee I know first-hand how important it is to have an active voice. The Commission is the voice for so many disparate communities. It would be detrimental for the community if this voice is not represented at the state level.

The Asian American community has unique needs and we need a state commission to represent the community effectively. The Commission cannot be effective if combined with other groups with other priorities.