

Testimony

The Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission Needs to Remain a Separate Commission

By: Bieu Tran, APAAC Commissioner

My name is Bieu Tran and I am a resident of Bridgeport, Connecticut. I received my appointment as Commissioner for the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (APAAC) from Majority Leader Martin Looney in November 2012. I am writing to strongly urge all legislators to vote **AGAINST** the consolidation of commissions and that APAAC be allowed to remain a separate commission in order to continue serving the Asian Pacific American community in our state.

The accomplishments of the Commission are not only beneficial for the Asian Pacific community but for our state as a whole. Even with a modest budget, APAAC and its Commissioners have achieved a great deal. I shall highlight two. First, APAAC has been a partner with the City of Bridgeport in creating the first "Little Asia" district in Connecticut. This is a statewide achievement as ethno-linguistic diversity increases economic competitiveness. Having ethno-linguistic enclaves throughout the state would transform Connecticut into a welcoming destination for potential investors from Asia, namely, India and China. Second, the Commission has been working hard on anti-bullying and hate crime issues. These have been major concerns of the Asian Pacific American community and as we have painfully witnessed from the Sandy Hook tragedy, these concerns transcend race and ethnicity. We hope to continue educating the public on these issues and push forward for more enforcement of existing laws addressing them.

In my career in government serving the people of Bridgeport, I have had the honor to work closely with elected officials in all levels of government, ranging from members of Congress, mayors, state officials to city council members. These experiences have taught me that in difficult economic times, budget cuts are necessary so that we do not pass on the burden to middleclass taxpayers who are struggling to survive. I get it. This is just the simple truth of government. Nonetheless, rather than giving in to the mirage of cutting our way to prosperity, we should be striving for "smarter" government. Smarter government means that we pay for programs that yield the greatest benefits and APAAC is one such program.