

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Regarding  
Governor's Proposed Budget  
Feb. 19, 2013

Testimony by William A. Howe, Ed.D. - Glastonbury, CT

Thank you for this opportunity to testify **AGAINST** the proposed consolidation of the African American, Latino & Puerto Rican, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commissions, as well as the Commissions on Women, Children and the Elderly.

My name is Bill Howe and I am a resident of Glastonbury. I am here as a concerned citizen and a parent of two children who were educated in Connecticut. I am the Chair of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and I have been an educator for over 35 years. My area of expertise is in multicultural education, cultural competence, gender equity, civil rights, and bullying & harassment.

Since moving to Connecticut I have been involved in advocating on behalf of my community as well as my brothers and sisters in other communities. Our commissions fight common problems – bigotry and bias – among them. But our relationships to the people we represent are unique. The needs are unique.

The 157,000 Asian Pacific Americans living in Connecticut come from almost 50 different countries and speak dozens of different languages and dialects.

Many economists say that in just a matter of a few years China will become the world's Number One economic super power. The rising importance of connections to Asian countries was made evident by Governor Malloy's trip last year to the World Economic Forum Summit in China to promote Connecticut's businesses and to try to attract Chinese and other Asian investment in the state.

Asian Pacific Americans bring much to this state but we still face serious changes. I will end with naming just a few.

Health Care – Many Connecticut Asian Pacific Americans lack culturally and linguistically competent health care. Mental health remains a crisis with the still alarming statistic that the highest suicide rate in the country is among Asian American girls age 15-24.

Civil Rights – Many in our community still face bias and hate crimes because of appearance and religion – mainly our Muslim and Sikh members.

Bullying & Harassment – The U. S. State Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice cite that Asian American are the most bullied children in our schools – 54 percent are bullied.

The budget for the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission has been cut drastically each of the last two years, to the point that we have essentially no budget, no money to operate past salaries for two employees. The Executive Director has not paid herself mileage since last May and has voluntarily taken two weeks of furlough time to keep the Commission operating. We have had to rely on charitable contributions to cover our meager expenses.

It costs each Connecticut resident 4 cents a year now to fund our Commission. That is a small price to pay to defend the civil rights of over 157,000 people.

Thank you for listening.