



STATE OF
CONNECTICUT
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS
COMMISSION



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Senator Toni N. Harp
Representative Toni E. Walker
Appropriations Committee
Room 2700
Legislative Office Building
Hartford CT, 06106

Dear Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and Appropriations Committee members,

Chair

Dr. William A. Howe

Vice-Chair

M. Angela Rola

Secretary

Sheila Charmoy

Commissioners

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Arlene Avery

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Dr. Jagat Patel

Thomas Nguyen-Phuoc

Arvind Shaw

Kanwaljit Singh

Bieu Tran

Henry C. Lee

(Honorary)

Executive Director

Mui Mui Hin-

McCormick

Legislative Analyst

Jonathan Weeks

APAAC Intern

Kyle Barrette

My name is Mui Mui Hin-McCormick, Executive Director of Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission. I come to you as a concerned CT resident and State Employee opposing the Governor's proposal, HB 6350, An Act Concerning The Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2015, And Other Provisions Relating to Revenue, primarily Section 11 consolidating the five Commissions and eliminating the Commission on Aging. There are multiple reasons why consolidation of the five Commissions and elimination of the Commission on Aging would be counterproductive for all of our communities.

I am a Chinese Lao Refugee that was fortunate to make it to the United States due to the sacrifices my parents made. At that time, as a child and teenager I didn't understand why my parents were leaving their native country, family, friends, and everything they had to come to a foreign place that they were not familiar with. I have been blessed with the experiences I have had regardless of whether it was positive or negative. During my childhood I had to endure bullying in the schools due to being different. As a child I had to act as an interpreter for my parents in various situations such as medical, basic needs, legal, etc. I can recall a time when I was eight years old and my mother was hospitalized due to a medical procedure. At that time, no one explained to me and my siblings that this was a common procedure and we didn't have anything to worry about. Instead as a family, we internalized our concerns and worries about my mother's well-being even to the point of thinking she may pass away. How did this impact me as a child? This was devastating and I carried the burden of being the interpreter for my father with this horrible news. This is only one example of countless experiences I and many other refugee and immigrant families have had in trying to assimilate to the American culture.

Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission represents almost 50 countries and numerous Asian languages; the Chinese language alone has over 2,000 dialects. There are multiple issues that our Asian Pacific American (APA) population comes across. Lack of data on APAs in CT is a huge barrier and this has harmed our communities since many agencies and institutions respond to the Commission inquiries stating our population is "insignificant" in comparison to other populations, which is not appropriate or acceptable.

Additionally, APA communities are typically quiet and do not get equal representation for many things such as funding for programs that are culturally and linguistically suitable. As one of the fastest growing minority populations nationally and locally, U.S. Census reported APA population grew from 95,368 in 2000 to 157,088 in 2010, which is remarkable as this is a 65% increase in just ten years. There are a total of 164 non-English home languages throughout Connecticut school systems and many of those are Asian languages. Additionally 24% of the state's population is immigrant or children of immigrants, who contribute to Connecticut's overall wellbeing. Governor Malloy recently took a trip to China in attempts to strengthen the current relationship with the CT's sister city, Shandong Province. Our Commission supports the Governor's efforts with marketing Connecticut as a great place for Chinese business owners to establish themselves. This would not only bring in needed revenue but job opportunities for Connecticut residents. APAAC has already participated in presenting to the Chinese delegation that came in January, hosted by DECD and CT China Council. APAAC was able to highlight the Chinese population in CT and inform the 26 member delegation about what CT has to offer on a social and community level.

Additional issues include:

Over 50% of APAs lack English language proficiency due to the high proportion of immigrants.

The US Department of Education reports APA children endure the most bullying in schools.

The number of APAs who live below the poverty level is significantly higher than then the number of non-Hispanic whites.

The lack of culturally competent health care professionals, including hospital interpreters contributes to low rates of health services utilization, high rates of emergency room use, and inadequate prenatal care.

Victims of crime programs need culturally responsive support, particularly in cases of domestic violence and sex crimes.

Lack of affordable housing often left APAs with limited options for living.

Our Commission is needed to provide a voice to the underserved Asian community in CT. It is crucial we continue to play an important role in advising the Governor and CT General Assembly in how bills/policy may impact the APA community. APAs continue to contribute to CT at all levels, socially, economically, educationally and much more. I hope I have been able to provide some information pertaining to the Asian Pacific American population and the need for this Commission to continue its existence. I have also included testimony from some of our Commissioners and CT residents supporting our Commission. I thank you for the opportunity to present to you and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mui Mui Hin-McCormick
Executive Director
Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission

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