

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION NEEDS TO REMAIN A SEPARATE COMMISSION

My name is Edward Lee and I am the president of Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association ("CAPABA"). CAPABA is a professional association representing and advocating the interests of Asian Pacific American lawyers, the legal profession and the Asian Pacific American communities in the state of Connecticut. CAPABA is strongly against Proposed Bill No. 5049 (AN ACT CONSOLIDATING THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONS). If this Bill is passed, the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission ("APAAC") will consolidate with other legislative commissions. CAPABA's opposition is based on the following reasons:

- (1) Asian Pacific Americans ("APA") have an estimated population of 157,000 in Connecticut and are the fastest growing minority population in Connecticut. The APA community is diverse and consists of individuals from various backgrounds and countries. The diversity of the APA community comes with unique issues and needs. Without the APAAC, the unique perspectives and needs of the APA community may not be heard. A consolidated commission may not have the resources to deal with the myriad of issues facing the APA community.
- (2) The APAAC serves as an important connection between the General Assembly, the Governor and the APA community. It serves as an official forum to discuss issues that directly affect the APA community concerning healthcare, access to justice, economic development, education, housing, and job training, which are not as keenly felt by more established minority groups. This bill will disenfranchise an important, and rapidly growing, block of voters.
- (3) Much of the APA population growth is attributed to immigration. There are unique issues facing these more recent immigrants from Asian countries such as language and cultural barriers. Although APAs may be seen as the "model minority," immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnamese are especially disadvantaged in terms of healthcare, employment opportunities, and education. APAs continually face bias, discrimination and hate crimes that are often

overlooked or under-reported. The APAAC is an additional resource for them to turn to and losing this resource would have an adverse socioeconomic ripple effect throughout Connecticut.

(4) APAAC has been a long-time ally of CAPABA working on mutual issues of critical importance to the APA community. CAPABA's leadership and members regularly attend events hosted by the APAAC to connect with the APA community. Without the partnership of APAAC, it will be difficult for CAPABA to gain an essential understanding of the growing needs of the APA community that we seek to serve.

It is for the above reasons that CAPABA is against Proposed Bill No. 5049 to consolidate the APAAC with other legislative commissions. Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony.

Sincerely yours,



Edward C. Lee, Esq.
President
Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association