

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Daniel S. Jo 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 Asian Pacific American communities in the state of Connecticut. This written testimony is being submitted in support of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (“APAAC”) which plays a vital role in representing the interests of Asian Pacific American (“APA”) communities throughout Connecticut.

A number of key factors related to our APA communities demonstrate the importance of APAAC’s role and the urgency of its mission:

- (1) APA communities in Connecticut are culturally and linguistically diverse, consisting of individuals from various backgrounds and countries. The diversity of the APA communities presents unique issues and needs, especially on matters concerning education, economic self-sufficiency, employment, health care, housing, language assistance, cultural barriers, and justice.
- (2) Although APAs may be seen as the “model minority,” this view does not adequately acknowledge the challenges and difficulties that continue to weigh on various APA communities. For example, immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnamese are particularly disadvantaged in the areas of healthcare, employment opportunities, and education. Moreover, despite the increasing APA population in Connecticut and cultural awareness initiatives, APAs overall continue to face bias, discrimination and hate crimes that are often overlooked or under-reported.

(3) APAAC serves as an important bridge between the General Assembly, the Governor and various APA communities. It provides an official forum at both state and local levels to discuss issues and policies impacting the needs and concerns of all APA communities in Connecticut. Furthermore, APAAC brings together diverse groups of APAs to work together in achieving common goals. Without an organization like APAAC, the voices of all APA communities would not be effectively heard.

(4) APAAC has been a long-time partner with CAPABA in working on mutual issues of critical importance for Connecticut's APA communities. CAPABA's leadership and members have regularly attended events hosted by the APAAC to connect with APA communities and further understand their needs and concerns. This critical partnership ensures that a broad-based approach to serving our APA communities is possible.

We believe that it is of utmost importance that APAAC continues to be provided the resources necessary to carry out its charge to advocate on behalf of the diverse interests and concerns of Connecticut's APA communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony.

Sincerely,



Daniel S. Jo, Esq.
President
Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association