

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the

Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Edward Masse. I am from Trumbull, CT.

I work facilitating a departmental program at the Asian American Cultural Center at UConn Storrs. I am a Junior Chinese Major, Human Rights Minor and Angela Rola who is an integral part of APAAC is also our director of this Cultural Center at The University of Connecticut.

The work that APAAC and the other legislative commissions do is indispensable to the success of the state of Connecticut. It took until 2008 for the APA community to have a commission of their own, and their budget is already extremely small. Cutting the budget more or getting this commission cut altogether would be doing this state a disservice.

*Every* person who lives and works in Connecticut contributes to the good of the Connecticut society. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are a group that traditionally has not been seen as important, and Asian American issues repeatedly get swept under the rug. Additionally, the APA community is so vast and diverse, with varying experiences, linguistic and cultural diversity which presents a unique challenge to APAAC.

If the APA community does not have a voice speaking out for them, who will? By cutting this commission, you are telling the APA community that they are *not* important. You are telling them that they are *not* an integral, appreciated part of the Connecticut experience. This is a very dangerous first step towards a Connecticut in deep disarray and disharmony.

The model minority myth continues to dismantle the positive strides we in the APA community have fought so hard for and the idea that "Asians don't have problems the same way other disadvantaged groups do" creates a culture of complacency, and we cannot sit idly by as that permeates throughout our state's culture. In addition, there are no equivalent advocacy groups that can take up this cause if APAAC is dissolved or budget is cut. If these cuts are finalized, we as a community will come and protest.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Edward Masse