
Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality (AACRE)

2003 Asian and Pacific American Legislative Report Card

**How State Legislators Voted on Priority Issues for
California's Asian and Pacific Americans**

**AACRE is a joint project of
Chinese for Affirmative Action and Asian Pacific American Legal Center**

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A NEW VOICE FOR ASIAN AND PACIFIC AMERICANS IN THE STATE CAPITAL

In March 2003, two longstanding Asian and Pacific American (APA) civil rights organizations established “Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality,” (“AACRE”) the first legislative policy office in the state capital dedicated to advocating on behalf of California’s APA community.

AACRE is a non-partisan collaborative project of Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), based in San Francisco, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (APALC), based in Los Angeles. These two organizations share a combined five decades of experience and leadership advocating on statewide policy issues impacting California’s diverse APA community.

Founded in 1969, CAA is committed to defending and promoting the civil rights of Asian and Pacific Americans within the context of advancing multiracial democracy in the United States. CAA has been a leading statewide advocacy force on a wide range of issues, including language access, workplace and educational equality, affirmative action, workforce development, voting rights, and other civil rights concerns.

APALC was established in 1983 and has become the largest organization in southern California that provides APA and other communities with multi-lingual, culturally sensitive services and legal education. At the state level, APALC has helped to build statewide coalitions and advocated on policy issues including low-wage and immigrant labor, consumer protection, voting rights, immigrant health and social services, and language access.

THE AACRE LEGISLATIVE REPORT CARD

This report card evaluates Assembly and Senate floor votes in the 2003 legislative year on 14 significant bills and resolutions affecting issues important to California’s Asian and Pacific American (APA) community. These 14 bills and resolutions were selected because they were strongly supported by APA organizations and community groups during the legislative process, or otherwise conferred particularized benefits for APA communities. The range of issues addressed by this legislation includes language access, voting rights, consumer protection, anti-discrimination initiatives, and educational equity. Each of the bills and resolutions also made it to the floor of both houses of the State Legislature, affording every member an opportunity to cast their votes.

The percentage ratings are based on a calculation of votes cast in favor of the 14 bills and resolutions. A more detailed explanation of the Report Card methodology and descriptions of each of the bills and resolutions follow later in this report.

This report is intended to serve as an informational resource for state policymakers and the general public about legislative voting records on issues important to California’s diverse APA communities. The ratings do not constitute an endorsement or a denunciation of any member of the State Legislature.

A SNAPSHOT OF CALIFORNIA'S APA POPULATION: GROWTH AND DIVERSITY

According to the 2000 Census, Asian and Pacific Americans comprise 13 percent (4.4 million people) of the population in California, a growth of 54 percent in just one decade since 1990.

The U.S. Census Bureau includes a diversity of ethnic groups in the "Asian" and "Pacific Islander" categories. Among them are Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Chinese, Fijian, Filipino, Guamanian or Chamorro, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Native Hawaiian, Pakistani, Samoan, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, Tongan, and Vietnamese. APA ethnic groups in California with the highest populations (over 100,000) in 2000, include Chinese (1,122,187), Filipino (1,098,321), Vietnamese (484,023), Japanese (394,896), Korean (375,571), and Asian Indian (360,392).

Over 66 percent of APAs in California are foreign-born. Of this immigrant and refugee population, over half (53 percent) speak English with limited proficiency (less than "very well") or not at all.

Even more, the 2000 Census reports that 80 percent of California's APA residents aged 5 and over speak a language other than English at home. Twenty-three percent live in linguistically isolated homes, where all household members aged 14 and over have at least some difficulty in speaking English.

Despite the fact that APAs in California have the highest median household income of any racial group in the state (\$55,366 annual gross income), approximately 12.8 percent live in poverty (versus 7.8 percent of Non-Hispanic whites). Poverty rates are significantly higher among Southeast Asian refugee populations and Pacific Islanders, including 63 percent of Hmong, 51 percent of Laotians, 47 percent of Cambodians, and 16 percent of Pacific Islanders in the state.

A RECORD NUMBER OF APA LEGISLATORS

The 2003 legislative year saw a record seven APA legislators in the State Capitol. The five APA Democrats in the Assembly (Wilma Chan, Judy Chu, Carol Liu, George Nakano, and Leland Yee) together comprise the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus. Two Assembly Republicans (Shirley Horton and Alan Nakanishi) round out the seven. There are currently no APA state senators.

In 2003, members of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus authored and strongly supported significant legislation to improve the lives of California's Asian and Pacific American community on issues as varied as language access, consumer protection, educational equity, health care, and voting rights. Notably, at a time when immigrants were under suspicion and attack because of 9-11, APA members of both parties stood together to voice strong support for Assembly Joint Resolution 30, a measure to condemn the remarks of U.S. Congressman Howard Coble who outraged Asian and Pacific Americans across the nation by offering justification for the Japanese American internment on a radio call-in program.

ASIAN AMERICAN ISSUES: AN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Asian American issues emerge from a long history of collective immigration patterns and experiences. Reflecting the high percentage of foreign born in the Asian American population, issues of language access, political empowerment, and anti-discrimination protections figure prominently among the community's legislative priorities.

Language Access

Approximately 40 percent of Californians primarily speak a language other than English at home. In addition to the 53 percent of APA immigrants who speak English less than "very well," almost half (48.5 percent) of the 9.8 million Latinos in California are foreign-born, and 70 percent of them speak English with limited proficiency or not at all. Federal and state laws have long protected immigrants from discrimination based on national origin or limited-English proficiency. Policymakers have addressed the issue from several important perspectives, including access to government services, health care, education, and consumer protection. Six of the fourteen pieces of legislation identified in this Report Card address language barriers. They include AB 177 (Oropeza), AB 309 (Chu), AB 534 (Vargas), AB 1485 (Firebaugh), SB 146 (Escutia), and SB 853 (Escutia).

CAA and APALC have worked individually and in coalition to build working relationships with diverse immigrant and civil rights organizations to advocate for improved language access. More so than any other major policy issue, language issues are shared by Asian and Latino communities, as reflected by groundbreaking legislation in this area sponsored by Asian American and Latino legislators. Together, these communities form a powerful voting block that has led to significant state language access reforms.

Empowerment and Equality

Like all Californians, APAs care greatly about basic quality of life issues such as health care, education, and public safety. And as the fastest growing major demographic group in the state, APAs prioritize issues of fairness and equality. Therefore, legislation addressing voting rights, anti-discrimination protections, and issues of injustice impacting the community has been important in the 2003 legislative year. Prominent among these initiatives are AB 177 (Oropeza), AB 526 (Chan), AB 587 (Ridley-Thomas), AB 781 (Lieber), AB 1715 (Assembly Committee on Judiciary), AJR 6 (Diaz), and AJR 30 (API Legislative Caucus).

BREAKING THE MOLD

On many issues, voting is fairly predictable along party lines. By the time it arrives on the Assembly or Senate floor, legislation has already made it through at least one policy committee and a fiscal committee. How Democratic and Republican committee members vote is often a sign of how many of their party colleagues will vote on the floor. In addition, the Democratic and Republican Caucus leadership analyze each piece of legislation that comes to the floor for a vote. Generally, there is a recommendation to the legislators on how to vote, and members of either party often follow their Caucus recommendation. Depending on the importance assigned to the issue by Caucus leadership, there can be great pressure to vote the party line.

As a whole, Democratic members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the 14 pieces of legislation we identified as particularly important to the APA community. Assembly Democrats averaged a 98.5 % rating. Senate Democrats averaged 96.6 %.

As a whole, Republican members were more likely than not to vote against the same legislation. Assembly Republicans averaged a 41.2 % rating, while Senate Republicans averaged 33.3 %.

Three Republicans in the Assembly bucked the trend more than others, and deserve special mention:

- **Ken Maddox**, representing an Orange County district where more than one out of every four constituents is APA, garnered the highest score of any Republican member with 57 percent. Notably, Mr. Maddox crossed party lines to vote for AB 309 (Chu) and SB 146 (Escutia), companion measures which increased consumer protections for over 2 million Californians who primarily speak Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Korean.
- **Bonnie Garcia**, serving a southern border region comprising much of Imperial and Riverside counties, does not have a sizeable APA constituency, but over 60 percent of her constituents are Latino. She scored 50 percent. Ms. Garcia crossed party lines to vote for AB 1485 (Firebaugh), ensuring that bilingual education programs for young English language learning children (K-3) are not unfairly excluded from the millions of dollars allocated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act for “Reading First” programs in California.
- **Robert Pacheco** also represents a diverse district encompassing part of the Inland Empire in Southern California. Latinos and Asians are almost equal in number with one-quarter of the population each, and together make up half of this district. He also scored 50 percent. Mr. Pacheco recognized the importance of accessible health care for immigrants in crossing party lines to vote for SB 853 (Escutia).

2003 Asian and Pacific American Legislative Report Card

REPORT CARD RATING METHODOLOGY






Ratings were calculated by examining each member's votes on the 14 bills and resolutions identified as particularly important to California's Asian and Pacific American (APA) communities. These bills and resolutions were identified based on either strong support by APA organizations and community groups for the legislation during the legislative process, or particularized benefit for APA communities. Our record reflects the final floor votes on each piece of legislation, meaning the votes of the full Assembly or Senate on the final version of each bill or resolution.

AACRE supports each of the identified bills and resolutions because of the impact on APA communities in the areas of language access, civil rights, anti-discrimination, health care, education, consumer protection, and voting rights. All of the earmarked bills and resolutions made it to the floors of both houses of the Legislature, and therefore afforded each member of the Legislature an opportunity to cast their votes, "Aye," or "Nay."

Because all 14 measures were beneficial to APAs, an "Aye" vote on these bills and resolutions was viewed in our analysis as favorable to APA interests. A "Nay" vote was therefore regarded negatively in the rating calculation.

Similarly, failing to cast a vote, or "Not Voting," that was not the result of an excused absence on the day of the floor vote factored in our rating calculus as if it were a "Nay" vote. In addition to voting "Aye" or "Nay," members may choose to "stay off" a bill and not cast a vote. Since members who inadvertently miss a vote on a bill because they were off the floor temporarily or engaged in a conversation have an opportunity to adjust their vote before the end of the floor session, we do not consider "Not Voting" a neutral position on the bill. It should be noted, however, that several members who stayed off the vote on a final version of a bill may have supported the policy behind the legislation as reflected by "Aye" votes on an earlier version. A failure to vote on a bill attributable to an excused absence, as verified by the Daily Journal, was not counted against a member, and did not figure into the rating calculus.

REPORT CARD KEY

D	=	Democrat
R	=	Republican
Y	=	"Aye" vote
N	=	"Nay" vote
NV	=	Not Voting (member not excused)
A	=	Absent (member was excused)
	=	less than 5 % APA district population
	=	5-10 % APA
	=	10-20 % APA
	=	20-30 % APA
	=	over 30 % APA

2003 Voting Record – California State Senate

Name	Party	Hometown	District	APA Pop.	Rating	AB 78	AB 177	AB 309	AB 526	AB 534	AB 587	AB 781	AB 1485	AB 1715	AJR 6	AJR 30	SB 146	SB 578	SB 853
Sam Aanestad	R	Grass Valley	4	4.22%	31%	N	Y	A	N	Y	NV	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	N	N
Dick Ackerman	R	Irvine	33	12.79%	29%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	N	N
Richard Alarcón	D	Sun Valley	20	9.32%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Deirdre Alpert	D	San Diego	39	14.71%	93%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Roy Ashburn	R	Bakersfield	18	3.82%	36%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Jim Battin	R	La Quinta	37	4.54%	29%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	NV	NV
Debra Bowen	D	Marina del Rey	28	16.18%	93%	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
James Brulte	R	Rancho Cucamonga	31	6.47%	36%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
John Burton	D	San Francisco	3	14.48%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gil Cedillo	D	Los Angeles	22	13.62%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wesley Chesbro	D	Arcata	2	6.62%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jeffrey Denham	R	Salinas	12	6.20%	36%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Denise Moreno Ducheny	D	San Diego	40	8.63%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Joseph Dunn	D	Santa Ana	34	16.74%	86%	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	NV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Martha Escutia	D	Whittier	30	6.36%	93%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Liz Figueroa	D	Sunol	10	32.63%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dean Florez	D	Shafter	16	6.45%	92%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dennis Hollingsworth	R	Murietta	36	6.60%	29%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	N	N
Ross Johnson	R	Irvine	35	17.54%	27%	N	Y	A	N	A	A	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	N	NV
Betty Karmette	D	Long Beach	27	13.10%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
William J. Knight	R	Palmdale	17	5.87%	29%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	N	N
Sheila James Kuehl	D	Santa Monica	23	9.21%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mike Machado	D	Linden	5	14.35%	86%	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y
Bob Margett	R	Arcadia	29	20.75%	43%	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Tom McClintock	R	Thousand Oaks	19	5.98%	36%	NV	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Bruce McPherson	R	Santa Cruz	15	8.50%	43%	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Bill Morrow	R	Oceanside	38	7.20%	31%	A	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	NV	NV
Kevin Murray	D	Los Angeles	26	11.83%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rico Oller	R	San Andreas	1	4.98%	29%	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	NV	N	N	N
Deborah Ortiz	D	Sacramento	6	14.65%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Don Perata	D	Oakland	9	16.85%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Charles Poochigian	R	Fresno	14	6.24%	36%	NV	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Gloria Romero	D	Los Angeles	24	19.35%	93%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jack Scott	D	Altadena	21	18.19%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Byron Sher	D	Stanford	11	15.61%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nell Soto	D	Pomona	32	5.10%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jackie Speler	D	Hillsborough	8	34.62%	100%	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tom Torlakson	D	Antioch	7	12.93%	93%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	Y
John Vasconcellos	D	Santa Clara	13	28.28%	86%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	NV
Edward Vincent	D	Inglewood	25	9.24%	100%	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

THE LEGISLATION

Following is a description of each bill and resolution used in this Report Card, and an explanation of the policy significance to California's Asian and Pacific Americans.

Assembly Bills

AB 78 (Reyes) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – urges social science classroom instruction on the role and contributions of Southeast Asians during the Vietnam War, including the "secret war" in Laos.

This bill was introduced in response to a rash of suicides by Hmong community youth in Fresno. Fresno Assembly Member Sarah Reyes met with local Hmong community leaders to determine how to address the crisis. Constituents attributed the suicides in part to poor self-esteem and an inability among youth to cope with Hmong ethnic identity in their own local setting. Community members suggested that an educational curriculum which included instruction about the heroic actions of Laotian refugees, including personal testimonies, would instill confidence and pride among Hmong youth. AB 78 promises to have a positive impact for the growing Southeast Asian American population in the Central Valley.

AB 177 (Oropeza) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – creates a Voter Bill of Rights (VBOR) and requires the Secretary of State to publish posters and other appropriate materials containing the VBOR in English and sufficient non-English languages to comply with the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The VBOR enumerates rights already existing in various Government and Election code provisions. Among the rights included in the VBOR are the right of every valid registered voter to: cast a ballot, vote provisionally if a voter's name does not appear on the rolls, cast a ballot if a voter is in line prior to the close of the polls, cast a secret ballot free from intimidation, receive assistance in voting if required, return a completed absentee ballot to any precinct in the county, and receive election materials in non-English languages applicable to the voter's precinct. Selected counties in California are currently required by the Voting Rights Act to translate ballots and provide oral assistance into the following Asian languages: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. AB 177 ensures that voters are informed about their voting rights not only in English, but also in these languages, spoken by millions of Asian and Pacific Americans throughout California.

AB 309 (Chu) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – extends existing consumer protections currently available to Spanish speakers to include speakers of Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean as well.

According to the 2000 Census, almost 40 percent of Californians speak a language other than English as their primary language in the home. Spanish speakers make up just over 8 million, and Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean speakers together comprise another 2.1 million of the total population over 5 years old who primarily speak a language other than English in the home. Combined, these five languages capture 83 percent of all Californians who speak a language other than English as their primary language in the home. Assembly Member Judy Chu introduced this legislation to expand the protection of California Civil Code section 1632 to major Asian language communities in response to alleged fraudulent activity by unscrupulous businesses that would employ bilingual salespeople to negotiate contracts with limited-English speaking consumers in

their native language, but then give the consumers English language contracts that varied materially from the terms and conditions they had just negotiated.

AB 526 (Chan) – VETOED BY GOVERNOR – would have established a pilot program in Alameda County to evaluate the effectiveness of Election Day voter registration in local elections, and required the Secretary of State to assess the program.

Studies show that providing eligible voters with the opportunity to register all the way up to Election Day increases voter turnout. In fact, the seven states that already have Election Day registration programs in place lead the nation in turnout. With low voter participation rates in California, Election Day registration offers the promise of increased engagement in the election process, particularly among new citizens, who may not be familiar with registration requirements, and younger, more mobile voters who may not realize that they have to re-register after they move. For Asian and Pacific American communities, whose voting participation rates fall short of their proportion of the eligible voter pool, efforts to make voting more accessible offer a promise of increased political empowerment.

AB 534 (Vargas) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – requires that immigration consultants translate service contracts as well as specified statements and receipts into their limited-English speaking clients' native languages. AB 534 also requires immigration consultants to return all original documents provided by clients in support of their applications.

Immigration consultant fraud is a growing problem. Some unscrupulous consultants have posed as attorneys, or employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Others have gouged vulnerable immigrants with exorbitant fees by holding on to vital original documents until payment is made. AB 534 is an attempt to curb these practices and help deter the exploitation of limited-English speaking immigrants who are in the process of naturalizing or adjusting their legal status in the United States. Over 2.6 million Asian and Pacific Californians were born abroad, and almost 45 percent of them are not United States citizens.

AB 587 (Ridley-Thomas) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – requires that voter registration forms contain a space in which the voter may voluntarily state his or her race and/or ethnicity.

While 2000 Census data shows that Asian and Pacific Americans make up almost 13 percent of the state population, they comprise just 6 percent of the California electorate according to statewide exit polls. AB 587 will assist voter outreach efforts by helping to identify areas in which registration and eligible voter participation among ethnic communities is lagging.

AB 781 (Lieber) - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – authorizes a school district or county educational office to retroactively grant high school diplomas to former pupils who were pulled out of school during the Japanese American internment.

Over 120,000 Japanese Americans were rounded up and sent to internment camps throughout the western United States during World War II. Robbed not only of their civil rights, homes, jobs, and possessions, tens of thousands also lost out on educational opportunities. AB 781 builds on a program first started in Santa Clara County to provide some remedy to those who, but for this injustice, would have graduated from high school over half a century ago.

AB 1485 (Firebaugh) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – prohibits the California Department of Education and the State Board of Education from excluding local "Reading First" programs that

teach English language learner (ELL) students through bilingual or non-English immersion instruction in consideration of funding through the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Last year, almost 200,000 California public school students who spoke primarily an Asian language were not yet proficient in English. California's share of federal NCLB dollars dedicated to "Reading First" programs is \$133 million. AB 1485 ensures that state authorized bilingual and language immersion programs for ELL students are not excluded from this federal grant money. "Reading First" is a kindergarten-to-third-grade reading improvement program.

AB 1715 (Assembly Committee on Judiciary) – VETOED BY GOVERNOR – precludes employers from requiring that employees or prospective employees agree to arbitrate any civil rights claim arising under the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) as a condition of employment.

California's FEHA is one of the strongest civil rights laws in the country, including protections against discrimination based on race, color, and national origin, among other classes. AB 1715 would have ensured that employees discriminated against in the workplace had an opportunity to file a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing or in a judicial forum.

Assembly Joint Resolutions

AJR 6 (Diaz) urges United States Attorney General John Ashcroft to suspend deportation proceedings against 275 South Korean immigrants who may have been victims of a corrupt INS official and rogue immigration consultants until a fair review process is conducted proving actual fraud in each case.

Four immigration consultants are alleged to have bribed a corrupt San Jose INS official over the course of a decade to obtain green cards for hundreds of unwitting Korean immigrants. The immigrants faced automatic deportation although some of them had been living and working in the country for over 15 years. AJR 6 was passed by both houses of the state legislature to urge Attorney General Ashcroft to ensure that each of the defrauded immigrants received due process.

AJR 30 (API Legislative Caucus) condemns statements made by United States Congressman Howard Coble (R-NC) justifying the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, urging him to apologize and asking him to resign from the chairmanship of the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

On a radio call-in program, Congressman Coble offered justification for the Japanese American internment, stating that some Japanese Americans "probably were intent on doing harm to us," and proceeding to suggest that Americans of Arab descent may be similarly "intent on doing harm" to the United States today. Asian and Pacific Americans and others who understand the historical significance of the Japanese American internment were outraged at such ignorant statements from an elected official with ability to help establish policies and practices affecting the entire country. In a post 9-11 world, when civil liberties have come under attack and ethnic profiling seems all too common, the prospect of Mr. Coble continuing to chair the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security is unacceptable. It is notable that, although some legislators decided not to cast a vote on the resolution, AJR 30 passed both the Assembly and Senate without a single "No" vote.

Senate Bills

SB 146 (Escutia) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – clarifies a loophole in existing consumer protection law by requiring that the terms of specified contracts negotiated in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, or Korean must be translated, except as exempted.

A companion measure to AB 309, SB 146 deters unscrupulous businesses from circumventing the intent of existing consumer protection law (Civil Code section 1632) for limited-English speakers. Senator Escutia introduced this important bill to address practices in which some businesses would negotiate agreements with customers in a language other than English, and then give the customer a mere blank form translated into his or her primary language, but lacking any of the substantive terms specific to the customer's individual legal obligations. Like AB 309, this bill will increase consumer protections not only for some eight million Spanish speakers, but also for the over two million Californians who primarily speak Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, or Korean at home.

SB 578 (Alarcón) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – requires state contractors to comply with specified anti-sweatshop conditions.

The State of California is a major consumer of garments, uniforms, and related laundry services from manufacturers across the globe. SB 578 requires garment vendors who contract with the State to ensure that their goods, made domestically or abroad, were not made by sweatshops – including workplaces that employ child labor, violate wage standards, or prohibit workers' rights to assemble and bargain collectively. The bill imposes similar requirements on laundry service contractors. California's own \$30 billion garment industry employs tens of thousands of workers, the majority of whom are immigrant women with little or no proficiency in English. Low-wage worker advocates estimate that 20 percent of California's garment workers are Asian immigrants.

SB 853 (Escutia) – SIGNED BY GOVERNOR – directs the California Department of Managed Care to issue regulations requiring health care service plans to assess subscriber needs and to provide language appropriate and culturally competent medical services.

SB 853 strengthens access to health care for the millions of Californians who are not proficient in English. The bill requires managed care associations and other health insurance plans in the state to translate vital documents, provide timely access to interpreters for limited-English proficient enrollees, and ensure the competency of interpreters and translators, among other things. When health care is not linguistically accessible, we know that LEP adults often rely upon their minor children to interpret for them. Generally, this is inappropriate and potentially traumatic for children. Indeed, children have testified at public hearings on the issue, describing how they have had to interpret for severely injured family members in the emergency room, for parents who have been diagnosed with cancer, and for other family members facing complex medical problems.

RATINGS OF MEMBERS FROM DISTRICTS WITH SUBSTANTIAL APA POPULATIONS

(Perfect ratings are **boldfaced**)

Assembly Members from Districts with APA Populations of 15 Percent and Higher

Member	APA Population (%)	Rating (%)
Rudy Bermudez (D-Norwalk)	17.91	100
John Campbell (R-Irvine)	17.00	29
Wilma Chan (D-Oakland)	19.44	100
Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park)	39.19	100
Rebecca Cohn (D-Saratoga)	20.73	100
Ellen M. Corbett (D-San Leandro)	18.02	100
Manny Diaz (D-San Jose)	27.56	100
John Dutra (D-Fremont)	37.92	100
Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles)	16.28	100
Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley)	15.41	100
Tom Harman (R-Huntington Beach)	15.10	43
Shirley Horton (R-Chula Vista)	17.31	43
Mark Leno (D-San Francisco)	21.96	100
Sally Lieber (D-Mountain View)	34.68	100
Carol Liu (D-La Canada Flintridge)	20.23	100
Ken Maddox (R-Garden Grove)	25.88	57
Gene Mullin (D-South San Francisco)	25.10	100
George Nakano (D-Torrance)	16.91	100
Jenny Oropeza (D-Long Beach)	17.10	100
Robert Pacheco (R-Walnut)	24.68	50
George A. Plescia (R-San Diego)	18.77	36
Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento)	18.81	100
Leland Yee (D-San Francisco)	44.41	100

Senators from Districts with APA Populations of 15 Percent and Higher

Member	APA Population (%)	Rating (%)
Debra Bowen (D-Marina del Rey)	16.18	93
Joseph Dunn (D-Santa Ana)	16.74	86
Liz Figueroa (D-Sunol)	32.63	100
Ross Johnson (R-Irvine)	17.54	27
Bob Margett (R-Arcadia)	20.75	43
Don Perata (D-Oakland)	16.85	100
Gloria Romero (D-Los Angeles)	19.35	93
Jack Scott (D-Altadena)	18.19	100
Byron Sher (D-Stanford)	15.61	100
Jackie Speier (D-Hillsborough)	34.62	100
John Vasconcellos (D-Santa Clara)	28.28	86