



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2007

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ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN CIVIC LEADERS TO CELEBRATE LIFE AND LEGACY OF CIVIL RIGHTS ICON

*Chinese for Affirmative Action Joins APA Elected Officials and Labor Activists in
Observing Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

San Francisco, CA—Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) will host a table at the 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor & Community Breakfast on Monday, January 15, 2007. CAA Executive Director Vincent Pan, along with several of San Francisco's Asian Pacific American elected leaders, will be joining hundreds of community, labor, and political leaders from across the Bay Area to honor Dr. King's contributions to the advancement of civil rights in America.

Each year, politicians, union members, nonprofit directors, and students attend this breakfast. They are a diverse crowd but have one thing in common—a shared commitment to Dr. King's goals of social justice and inclusion. Many in the audience formed their careers out of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. CAA itself was founded in 1969 by civil rights activists Lambert Choy, Lillian Sing, Ling-chi Wang and Germaine Wong who, inspired by the actions of leaders like Dr. King, saw a need to advocate for the equal opportunities of Chinese Americans living in San Francisco. The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—due in significant part to Dr. King's work—made the efforts of organizations like CAA even more relevant. These two landmark pieces of legislation codified discrimination as a crime and granted minorities the right to vote, and made programs such as affirmative action possible.

Despite Dr. King's assassination in 1968, his legacy would continue to inform the civil rights activism of Asian Americans in the later years. College campuses across the nation would eventually adopt Asian American studies programs after students staged marches, sit-ins, and hunger strikes—tactics also used by Dr. King and other supporters of nonviolent protest. On the legal front, prosecutors would defend the civil liberties of individuals who had been wronged by racial biases, the most visible cases involving Fred Korematsu and Vincent Chin.

"Many of the civil rights we enjoy today would not have been possible if not for the courage and persistence of Dr. King," stated CAA Executive Director Vincent Pan. "It's important for Chinese Americans to understand why we are honoring this extraordinary man. Monday is an opportunity for the community to re-avow our dedication to social justice. CAA is honored to be a part of Dr. King's legacy."

San Francisco Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting, a long time activist himself, stated, "My civil rights work goes back to my college years, when Dr. King's teachings expressed itself in everything we did. Because of his incredible work breaking down discriminatory barriers, Asian Americans have greater access to jobs, housing and government." Mr. Ting will be joining CAA at the event.

Also attending the breakfast will be keynote speaker Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and Jeff Adachi of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, who will be receiving an award.

WHAT: 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor & Community Breakfast

WHO: Chinese for Affirmative Action
Assembly Member Fiona Ma
Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting
Leon Chow, Chinese Progressive Association
David Lei, community leader

WHEN: Monday, January 15, 2007
8:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Photo op available after the program

WHERE: San Francisco Hilton
333 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco

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CAA | Chinese for Affirmative Action was founded in 1969 to protect the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans in the interest of advancing multiracial democracy in the United States. Today, CAA is a progressive voice in and on behalf of the broader Asian and Pacific American community. We advocate for systemic change that remedies racial injustice, ensures equal opportunities for communities of color, reduces language barriers, and promotes immigrant rights. www.caasf.org