

September 4, 2003

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman, Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness
2351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Boehner, Congressman Miller, and Congressman McKeon:

We write to express our strong support for the establishment of a designation for Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPISIs) under the Higher Education Act. Recently, an important piece of legislation, HR 333, was introduced by your colleague, Congressman David Wu, that would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include such a designation. We ask for your support of the swift passage of HR 333. We also ask that you do the following:

1. Co-sponsor HR 333.
2. Hold a hearing regarding HR 333 in the House Education and Workforce Committee.

Contrary to the model minority myth, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) face huge barriers in accessing higher education. The 2000 Census also showed that only 13.8% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, 11.4% of Cambodians, 9.4% of Laotians, and 20.2% of Vietnamese, over the age of 25 attained a bachelor's degree or higher as compared to the total population college graduation rate of 27.7%. Significantly, only 71.3% of all Asians in the United States over the age of 25 graduated from high school, as compared to the 80.7% of high school graduates from the population as a whole.

The AAPISI designation will provide a much needed focal point for federal agencies to support universities, colleges and community organizations to create programs to address critical challenges facing AAPI youth and communities in our nation.

- Under current law, the U.S. Department of Education is authorized to issue grants and assistance to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions. Through these designations, qualifying colleges and universities have been able to expand their capacity to serve minority

and low-income minority students. This bill seeks equity by providing increased higher education opportunities for low-income and underserved AAPI students.

- The legislation provides the U.S. Department of Education with the authority to issue grants of assistance to higher education institutions that have at least 10% AAPI undergraduate enrollment to enable such institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve AAPIs. Qualifying institutions will have to meet certain criteria, and priority consideration would be given to institutions that serve a significant percentage of low-income students.
- This legislation also provides an incentive for higher education institutions to partner with AAPI community based organizations. Both the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health and Human Services have extensive partnerships and outreach programs in African American, Hispanic, and Native American communities. A significant number of these programs are specifically targeted at minority serving institutions. Without a similar designation for AAPIs in the Higher Education Act, federal agencies are limited in their ability to address the needs of and outreach to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Passage of HR 333 would have ramifications well beyond strengthening institutions of higher education. Another critical role that this designation would play is to increase much needed data collection and disaggregation of data on AAPIs. Amending the Act to include AAPIs would result in an incentive and strengthen the infrastructure for federal agencies to address the AAPI community's needs.

As a broad alliance of educators, student groups, school administrators, national advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, and community-based organizations from across the country we believe that passing HR 333 is the right thing to do, both for Asian American and Pacific Islander students and for the United States as a whole. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to ensure that this important legislation is enacted.

On behalf of the following organizations and individuals:

National Organizations

Advocate Initiates for Grassroots Access
Asian American Institute
Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum
East Coast Asian American Student Union
Endowment for Strategic Leadership for Asian Americans, Inc.
Filipino Civil Rights Advocates
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association
Japanese American Citizens League

Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth
National Alliance of Vietnamese American Service Agencies
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian American Student Conference
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association for Advancement of Pacific Islanders
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
National Congress of Vietnamese Americans
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
Organization of Chinese Americans
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Vietnamese-American Public Affairs Committee
West Coast Asian and Pacific Islander Student and Alumni Network

State and Local Organizations

Asian American Association of the University of Notre Dame Organization,
Notre Dame, IN
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, New York, NY
Asian American Students' Association, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
Asian American Student Association, University of Miami, Miami, FL
Asian Health Services, Oakland, CA
Asian Law Caucus, San Francisco, CA
Asian Pacific American Coalition at the University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Los Angeles, CA
Asian Pacific Americans for Social Action (Rice University), Houston, TX
Asian Pacific Council (UC Berkeley), Berkeley, CA
Asian Pacific Islander Community Advocacy, Wichita, KS
Asian Pacific Islander Queers United for Action (AQUA), Washington, DC
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council, Los Angeles, CA
Asian Services Institute, Inc., Sacramento, CA
Boston Asian Students Alliance, Boston, MA
Cambodian Association of America, Long Beach, CA
Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, Inc, Philadelphia, PA
Cambodian Children's Association, Inc, Falls Church, VA
Cambodian Women's Association, Seattle, WA
Chinatown Community Development Center, San Francisco, CA
Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Chicago, IL
Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Saint Paul, MN
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, Honolulu, HI
CSU Fresno Amerasia Club, Fresno, CA
East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, Oakland, CA
Filipino American Human Services, Inc., Jamaica, NY

Filipino American Development Foundation, San Francisco, CA
FIND, Inc., Richmond, VA
Harvard-Radcliffe Chinese Students Association, Cambridge, MA
Hmong American Partnership, Saint Paul, MN
Hmong Association of Washington, Seattle, WA
Hmong-Lao Assistance Association, Inc., Troy, NC
ICON Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Indo American Friendship Forum, Mill Creek, WA
Interim Community Development Association, Seattle, WA
International District Housing Alliance, Seattle, WA
Kealakehe Ahupua'a 2020, Inc., Kailua-Kona, HI
The Khmer Association of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
Khmer Health Advocates, West Hartford, CT
Korean American Coalition, Washington DC Chapter
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, Chicago, IL
Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA
Korean Women's Association, Tacoma, WA
Lao Family Community of Stockton, Stockton, CA
Lao Family Community Development, Inc., Oakland, CA
Lao Seri Association, San Francisco, CA
Lao American Women Association of the Greater Washington DC, Washington, DC
Little Manila Foundation, Stockton, CA
Little Tokyo Service Center Community Development Corp., Los Angeles, CA
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region VI (representing AZ, CA, HI)
Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, Garden Grove, CA
Organization of Chinese Americans - South Florida Chapter, Miami, FL
Organization Kealakehe Ahupua'a 2020, Inc., Kailua-Kona, Hawaii
Pennsylvania Immigrant & Refugee Women's Network
Philippine American Friendship Committee, Inc., Jersey City, NJ
Philippine Student Association at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana-Champaign, IL
Phoenix Internet Co., Milwaukee, WI
State of Washington, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA)
Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Los Angeles, CA
Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation Development Authority, Seattle, WA
Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition, Inc., Philadelphia, PA
Thai Community Development Center, Los Angeles, CA
United Cambodian Association of Minnesota, Inc., Saint Paul, MN
United Cambodian Development Association (UCDA), Lynnwood, WA
The United Montagnard Christian Church, Greensboro, North Carolina
Union of Pan Asian Communities, San Diego, CA
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor- United Asian American Organizations (UAAO), Ann Arbor, MI
Vanderbilt University Asian American Student Association, Nashville, TN
Veterans Equity Center, San Francisco, CA

Vietnamese Culture & Science Association, Houston, TX
Wellesley Asian Alliance, Wellesley, MA
West Bay Pilipino Multi-Service Center, San Francisco, CA
Wing Luke Asian Museum, Seattle, WA
YKASEC-Empowering the Korean American Community, Flushing, NY