



March 3, 2015

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members,

The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), founded in 1996, is a coalition of thirty-four Asian Pacific American organizations. NCAPA serves to represent the interests of the greater Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander communities and to provide a national voice for issues relevant to these communities.

We write to you today to express our strenuous opposition to four bills scheduled for mark up in the House Judiciary Committee: H.R. 1148, the Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act; H.R. 1153, the Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2015; H.R. 1149, the Protection of Children Act of 2015; and H.R. 1147, the Legal Workforce Act. These bills represent the wrong approach to reforming our country's flawed immigration system and harm all communities, including members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Asian Americans, the fastest growing racial group in the U.S., make up 6 per cent of our country's population. A majority of Asian Americans are foreign born and there are an estimated 1.3 undocumented AAPIs and close to 2 million AAPI individuals stuck in the visa backlogs.

H.R. 1148, The Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act

H.R. 1148 is the newest iteration of the notorious SAFE Act. This costly and wasteful bill strikes down President Obama's executive actions on immigration as well as past and future administrative reforms. This bill is an attack on our nation's values, families and the AAPI community. If enacted, this bill would burden, rather than honor, state and local law enforcement by forcing them to enforce immigration laws, without training or resources. When the SAFE Act was introduced in 2013 a wide range of civil rights groups, faith leaders, members of the business community and law enforcement professionals opposed this bill. The bill criminalizes the undocumented, spurs racial profiling of non-citizens and citizens and undermines family unity. The bill should be rejected without further consideration.

H.R. 1149, The Protection of Children Act and H.R. 1153, The Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act

The provisions in these bills are not in alignment with our country's commitment to protecting vulnerable children fleeing violence, trafficking, abuse or other crimes. The bills seek to reduce humanitarian protections, expand the detention of children in restrictive and inappropriate settings and weaken the ability of vulnerable children to access due process and family reunification. These proposals do not protect children but rather retraumatize them, and if enacted, represent a major departure from our country's tradition of humanitarian treatment for the most vulnerable. H.R. 1149 and H.R. 1153 must be rejected.

H.R. 1147, The Legal Workforce Act

1025 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036

OFFICERS

Gregory Cendana, Chair
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance,
AFL-CIO

Mee Moua, Vice Chair of Programs
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC

Priscilla Ouchida, Vice Chair of Membership
Japanese American Citizens League

Miriam Yeung, Vice Chair of Communications & Development
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

Lisa Hasegawa, Treasurer
National Coalition for Asian Pacific Community Development

Jasjit Singh, Secretary
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment Advocacy and Leadership

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

BP SOS

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

Hmong National Development, Inc.

Japanese American Citizens League

Laotian American National Alliance

National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging

National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development

National Korean American Service & Education Consortium

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates

Sikh American Legal Defense Education Fund

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

South Asian Americans Leading Together

South Asian Bar Association of North America

AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Asian American Psychological Association

Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies

Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund

Center for Asian American Media

Center for Asian Pacific American Women

Leadership Education on Asian Pacifics, Inc.

National Association of Asian American Professionals

National Federation of Filipino American Associations

National Japanese American Memorial Foundation

NCAPA is a project of Tides Center

The enforcement-only approach in The Legal Workforce Act has been widely rejected. The bill mandates all employers to use the E-verify system, known for its high error rate, and would result in the loss of jobs for non-citizens and citizens alike. Workers who lose their jobs or wages as a result of an E-verify error would have no recourse and the regime envisioned by the bill would incentivize employers to turn to workers in the underground economy. Such conditions increase the likelihood of workers' exposure to unsafe working conditions, sexual assault in the workplace, wage theft, debt bondage and other workplace abuses. H.R. 1147 should be discarded to protect workers, businesses and honor our country's values.

NCAPA will continue to urge Congress to reform our country's immigration system through meaningful and humane proposals that allow all families and communities in our country to grow. The four bills scheduled for mark up do not represent serious attempts to improve the immigration system and in their efforts to target immigrants for detention and deportation they harm members of the AAPI community, all communities of color, and workers and families throughout the country. We will continue to press members of the Committee to advance legislation that honors all American families, allows businesses and the economy to thrive and maintains our commitment to fairness and due process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mini Timmaraju". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mini Timmaraju
National Director