



ORGANIZATION OF CHINESE AMERICANS, INC.
Silicon Valley Chapter



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August 16, 2004

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) we are writing to express our deep concern for the California Performance Review Report's (CPR) suggestion to abolish the California State Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs AB 116 (Nakano, co authored by Chan, Chu and Liu). OCA is a non-profit, non-partisan civil rights educational and advocacy organization with an office and staff in Los Angeles and headquarters in Washington, D.C. Over 10,000 members make up the OCA organization. OCA has over 80 chapters and affiliates across the country. Nine (9) Chapters operate throughout California.

The Silicon Valley Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans includes individuals located in and around Santa Clara County, California. Santa Clara County is the geographic home of "Silicon Valley," the locus internationally acclaimed for its economy driven by technology and innovation. Our Chapter's goal is to build a strong Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) community in the Silicon Valley region. We are active in coalition building, advocacy, and supporting educational and cultural activities. Our membership is made up of entrepreneurs, community leaders, educators, professionals, parents, and Silicon Valley residents who support our work.

CPR's suggestion to consolidate the Asian Pacific Islander American Advisory Commission (APIAAC or the Commission) into a single entity under the Governor's Office, to be known as "Community Affairs" will further reduce the likelihood that the needs and concerns of the diverse Asian Pacific Islander American community will be heard and addressed. We believe that this suggestion would mark a step back for your APIA constituents and is both unwarranted and unwise for many reasons. We will address several below.

First, the APIA community fought long and hard to create and approve the Commission. The APIA Commission is the only ethnic commission in the state of California. Other states with similar APIA Commissions are Washington State, Washington, DC, Maryland, Minnesota, Georgia and Colorado. None of those states serves an APIA population as large or significant as in California.

Second, this Commission is essential to the large and growing APIA community in California. According to the 2000 Census, APIAs comprise over 12% of the population and include numerous nationalities within the APIA umbrella. The Commission is necessary to ensure that the needs of each nationality under the APIA category are addressed at all levels. Its purpose for

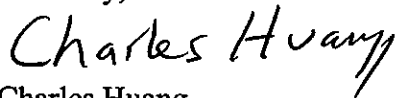
creation is more important than ever: "the Commission helps answer complicated questions concerning APIA communities and more importantly finds appropriate solutions that enable APIA communities to use state activities and social programs."

From our Chapter's perspective, the Commission serves one of the most significant APIA populations in the state. According to year 2000 Census data, 1,682,585 residents call Santa Clara County their home. Among these inhabitants, 431,811 Asian Pacific Islander Americans live within the county's borders, comprising twenty-six percent (26%) of the total population in 2000. These Census figures establish that Santa Clara County's APIA population ranks second in the state in percentage terms (behind San Francisco County) and second in absolute terms (behind Los Angeles County).¹ Thus, in relation to other APIA populations, Santa Clara County APIAs directly shape a uniquely high proportion of the business economy and cultural life of the Silicon Valley region at all levels. Among statewide regions, Santa Clara County's APIA population will be the second-most highly impacted by abolition of the APIA Commission on a percentage basis and the second-most affected on an absolute basis.

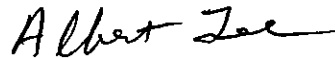
Third and most importantly, the Commission does not use state funds. It is funded solely by each Commission member and his or her fundraising efforts. Thus, there is little to no cost for its continued existence.

Abolition of the APIAAC would mark a significant step backward for your administration and its service to and understanding of California's APIA Community in Santa Clara County and beyond. We strongly urge you to review and examine the needs of your APIA constituents and maintain the Commission. We also urge that you utilize the Commission to help you and your administration better understand and reach out to the growing APIA Community that has been and will continue to be so vital to our State economy and cultural life. If we may assist you regarding these issues, please contact us directly at the address shown above.


Sincerely,



Charles Huang
Co-President
Organization of Chinese Americans,
Silicon Valley Chapter



Albert Lee
Co-President
Organization of Chinese Americans,
Silicon Valley Chapter



Jeffrey K. Lee
Vice-President and General Counsel
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cc: Raymond Wong, OCA National President
Christine Chen, Executive Director, OCA National office
Clara Chu, OCA Los Angeles Office

¹ Year 2000 Census data reveals that San Francisco County has a 31.3% APIA population comprised of 241,775 APIAs. That data also shows that Los Angeles County includes 1,147,834 APIA residents accounting for 12.2% of the overall population.