

# 2025/10/06 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2025/10/06

1:55 pm Eastern Time / 10:55 am Pacific Time

## 1. CAPAC Updates

Speaker: Judith Teruya, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. [Judith.Teruya@mail.house.gov](mailto:Judith.Teruya@mail.house.gov)

[not on record]

## 2. Update from Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

**Speaker:** Joanna YangQing Derman, Director, Anti-Profilng, Civil Rights & National Security Program, Advancing Justice | AAJC [jderman@advancingjustice-aaajc.org](mailto:jderman@advancingjustice-aaajc.org)

Joanna provided an update that several legislative initiatives are temporarily stalled or otherwise opaque due to uncertainty around the government shutdown.

In the meantime, AAJC is collaborating with the Asian American Scholars Forum to put on an advocacy training session on October 23<sup>rd</sup> for scholars and community members on effectively opposing the reinstatement of the China Initiative. The upcoming “Advocacy 101” series will cover how to conduct Hill meetings, identify key contacts, and communicate advocacy messages clearly. Please be on the lookout for a Save the Date from AASF in the near future with additional information.

Finally, AAJC held its annual American Courage Awards event on October 2, 2025. AAJC had the pleasure of honoring several organizations and individuals working to defend Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) history and spaces. This year's event was be hosted by **Aimee Cho**, an Emmy-winning journalist with NBC4 Washington. This year's honorees included **Asian Americans United (AAU)**, **Asian Texans for Justice (ATJ)**, **Andrew de las Alas**, and law firms **Jenner & Block**, **Perkins Coie**, **Susman Godfrey**, and **WilmerHale**. For more information, see AAJC's press statement [here](#).

### 3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

**Speaker:** Gisela Perez Kusakawa, Executive Director, Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF)

Gisela began by congratulating Mike German for his lifelong service and courage in standing up for civil rights, noting his key role in efforts to end the first iteration of the China Initiative. She also thanked Judith for her continued leadership and advocacy on behalf of the Asian American community.

Gisela shared that **AASF** continues to support directly impacted individuals and takes a holistic approach that integrates policy, communications, and narrative change. With the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States of America, AASF aims to highlight the historic and ongoing contributions of Asian Americans and immigrants in science and technology.

She announced that AASF is developing a science and technology policy platform, informed by leading scientists and scholars, to educate Congress and federal agencies about the harms of discriminatory policies like the China Initiative and to promote U.S. competitiveness grounded in inclusion and fairness.

Gisela thanked participants for supporting ASF-led advocacy, including a letter signed by over 1,400 faculty members and another joint organizational letter with AAJC, both opposing discriminatory practices.

She also highlighted AASF's upcoming advocacy training and legal education initiatives, including a CLE-credit webinar with the Federal Criminal Law Committee to help increase the number of attorneys equipped to represent Asian American and immigrant scientists and scholars.

She closed by emphasizing that collective action and continued advocacy are essential to defending democracy and protecting fundamental rights.

### 4. Update from Mike German

**Speaker:** [Mike German](#), Retired Fellow, Liberty & National Security, Brennan Center for Justice

Mike opened by thanking APA Justice, Gisela Perez Kusakawa and Pat Eddington, noting with humor that his retirement "is not an obituary" and that he remains available to help.

Reflecting on his career in the FBI, Mike described his years working undercover to infiltrate white nationalist networks. He emphasized that white nationalism is not a fringe ideology, as it is often portrayed, but rather a foundational force in American history that continues to influence society today. While his focus as an agent had been to stop people plotting violence, trafficking illegal weapons, and manufacturing explosives, the experience revealed to him how deeply these extremist ideologies are woven into the history of the United States—and how prevalent it still is.

He observed that it has become easier to express such views openly in recent years.

Mike left the FBI in 2004 after witnessing how the Global War on Terrorism was scapegoating Muslim Americans as a generalized threat. He recognized how easily those same FBI investigative methods could be turned against other communities.

He had already seen a lot of targeting of the Asian American community in that process, particularly during the first Trump administration, when they made it more explicit with the China Initiative. Mike was very pleased to be introduced to Jeremy and APA Justice, and so many of you. He already knew Gisella and Joanne.

He shared how meaningful it was to connect with all of us who were ready to respond constructively. Together, we created a webinar series that educated policymakers, journalists, and the public about discriminatory practices within federal law enforcement.

Mike said one of the most significant outcomes of that series was its impact on the media. In 2017 and 2018, coverage of alleged “China Initiative” cases was not very nuanced. When the FBI made an arrest, it was written in sensational terms, adopting the government’s accusations uncritically—before, months or even years later, it was discovered that the evidence was not nearly as strong as claimed, or had been mischaracterized.

Through the webinars, the community helped reporters and scholars understand the broader context, which led to more nuanced, skeptical, and fairer coverage. We started to see that shift in the media. That change, Mike said, helped everyone and strengthened the quality of public discussion. It fueled better scholarship, and we were involved in identifying problems with the system.

Mike credited the Asian American community’s remarkable organization and capacity for collective action as a central reason for this success. Having worked with many communities targeted by government programs, he noted that this one is unique in its resources, professionalism, and connections at high levels of government.

He encouraged the group to extend that strength outward—supporting other communities who may now face similar injustices. He highlighted CAPAC and Judith’s collaborative work with the

Congressional Black Caucus and others as examples of solidarity, stressing that “ultimately, it’s all the same issue.”

Drawing on lessons from his undercover work, Mike reflected that the use of racial grievance to divide society is a powerful and enduring tool. If one community can be scapegoated, any can. He urged everyone to stay vigilant, to help others before they are directly targeted, and to recognize how division is used to weaken all of us.

Although this is an old lesson, we, unfortunately, have to learn over and over again across generations. Mike said he is encouraged by the community’s strong organizational spirit and leadership.

Looking ahead, Mike expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming webinar series co-organized by APA Justice, the Committee of 100 (C100), and US-China Education Trust (USCET). He said the new series continues the essential work of promoting understanding in an era when media is fragmented and misinformation can easily amplify through narrow portals without understanding the nature of the threats that exist—or how those threats can be sensationalized and manipulated.

Mike urged policymakers to focus on genuine threats rather than policies that harm innocent, and productive individuals who are contributing to our society.

Mike also invited participants to connect with organizations in Latino, Black, immigrant, and LGBTQ communities, offering to help make introductions so that knowledge and resources can be shared across movements.

Mike closed by reaffirming his commitment to the cause:

“Let’s keep working together. Keep up the good work... and if there’s anything I can do to help, just let me know.”

## **5. Update from Maggie Lewis**

Speaker: [Margaret Lewis](#), Professor, Seton Hall University School of Law

At the beginning of her talk, Maggie Lewis joined others in thanking Mike German for his continued engagement despite “retirement,” noting with a smile that figures like Jeremy Wu and Steven Pei show retirement rarely means “retirement” or stepping away completely.

She then reflected on the recent passing of her mentor, Professor Jerry Cohen, at age 95—calling him a *titan* in the field of Chinese law and a pioneer in building bridges and fostering

human connection. Though his loss was not unexpected, she said it has been deeply felt by all who knew him.

Maggie pointed to the many tributes honoring him—from the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [ChinaFile](#), and [the U.S.-Asia Law Institute](#)—and emphasized that his legacy endures through the continued growth, adaptation, and collaboration of those he inspired. “*The work continues,*” she said, “*because Jerry would want nothing less.*”

Continuing her remarks, Maggie reflected on the complex and often discouraging dynamics of the moment, urging everyone to stay energized despite the difficult news. She wished attendees a “Zhongqiu Kuaile 中秋快乐” for the Mid-Autumn Festival, adding with a light moment that she found some cheer in the new “happy Taylor Swift” album—a “point of light in the darkness.”

Turning to her main remarks, she expressed excitement about the upcoming webinar series with the U.S.-China Education Trust (USCET), now led by Rosie Levine, whom she cited in her paper “*Criminalizing China*” and was finishing her graduate studies in China at that time and went to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. Rosie’s mother, Joan Kaufman, is deeply involved in the Schwarzman Scholars Program.

Maggie is working on a project with Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) including Professors Mike Lampton and Jessica Chen Weiss whose professorship is named after Mike. So this is another multi-generational effort.

The project is focused on the people-to-people aspect, specifically getting more American graduate students back to China. We really need to ensure a bi-directional flow of people, including younger generations.

The reality is there are many obstacles for Chinese students coming to the U.S.—yet they are still arriving in the tens and hundreds of thousands. In contrast, the number of U.S. students going to China is a trickle. And within that small group, it is relatively easy to find undergraduates going to study language. It is much more complicated for graduate students looking to do fieldwork, access archives, etc.

Back in the ‘90s and early 2000s, we did those things with restrictions, but still relatively unencumbered. Now, it has become almost impossible.

That is not directly tied to the Asian American piece, but Maggie thinks the more people who understand China as it is—not just as it is presented through siloed media, as Mike German says—the better.

Maggie shared her enthusiasm for technology and AI, noting how much she enjoys what these tools can do. Yet she also expressed concern that as U.S.–China relations and China studies increasingly depend on data scraping and satellite imagery, the human dimension—the stories, experiences, and personal connections—risks being lost.

The older generation of scholars had experiences like riding hard-seat trains for 24 hours to Xi'an or Wuhan. That gave them real texture—real insight into what China feels like. So keeping people physically crossing borders is something she is deeply committed to—and she knows many others in China studies are too.

The Association for Asian Studies is also working in this space, and many will be at their [annual conference in Vancouver](#) on March 12-15, 2026.

A couple more updates: I was just speaking with Gazella and I'm really excited that Seton Hall—where we haven't traditionally offered a course on Asian Americans—will have one this spring. Maggie will be teaching a course that includes some historical context but is framed around law, geopolitics, and the Asian American experience. It will cover things like the China Initiative 1.0, what we fear might be 2.0, and what we recognized as the in-between 1.5 version—what is happening between the versions.

It will also touch on transnational repression, birthright citizenship, and technology issues—like TikTok and cross-border connections.

Maggie hopes to build on what they can learn this "first pancake"—as she calls new teaching experiments. There are already excellent courses out there. For example, Professor Tom Lee and Judge Denny Chin at Fordham University have been teaching "Asian Americans and the Law" for many years, and they now have a textbook coming out. That will help push this content into more law schools.

Maggie agrees with Gisela that we need lawyers—not just civil rights lawyers, but employment lawyers, immigration lawyers—who can contribute pro bono and develop a real commitment to this kind of work. We need to inculcate that commitment in the next generation of lawyers.

As a realistic optimist, Maggie opined that the structural tensions in the U.S.-China relationship are not going away any time soon. So we need to learn how to navigate this moment as best we can.

Maggie also updated us on the National Science Foundation's "Safeguarding the Entire Community of the U.S. Research Ecosystem" (SECURE) initiative, which started as a research security program over a year ago.

Maggie is on the advisory board of the main SECURE center at the University of Washington in Seattle. The work there is focused on viewing research security not as siloed, compartmentalized pieces, but as part of a broader ecosystem. While these issues began in STEM, they are now spilling over into the social sciences and even the humanities.

There are real consequences. For example, people at state schools may not be able to use research funding to travel to China—even if their research is about China.

The SECURE analytics component—run by Hoover Institute and Texas A&M—is very active, along with regional hubs at places like Emory University and Rochester Institute of Technology. In addition to what is happening in Washington D.C., there are also major developments at the subnational level.

Florida and Texas have gotten the most attention, but recently, Indiana is also coming up a lot. That legislature is very active, and schools like Purdue University and Indiana University are responding with research security policies that are robust, to put it politely. As a lawyer, Maggie understands the General Counsel’s office is there to protect the university. But we need to avoid overbroad policies that unfairly target individuals and risk unintentionally—or intentionally—decoupling from China.

## 6. Update from Pat Eddington

Speaker: [Pat Eddington](#), Senior Fellow, Homeland Security and Civil Liberties, Cato Institute

Pat opened his remarks with an introduction of his new book, [The Triumph of Fear: Domestic Surveillance and Political Repression](#) from McKinley through Eisenhower, noting that the final chapter extends through 2023. He shared a link to the [April launch event](#) and encouraged attendees to watch or purchase the book—mentioning that Georgetown University Press was offering a 30% discount with the code “TGUF.”

This marks his first book published with an academic press—a process he joked left him “horrified” by the pricing structure, which seemed disconnected from the broader book market. Fortunately, he added, the paperback edition is priced more reasonably for most readers.

Pat warned about what he called the grave threat posed by the current “regime,” referring to Trump 2.0, which he said endangers “the very survival of the Republic.” The climate of fear and intimidation this regime has created is deliberate. The word “administration” implies responsible stewardship, and certainly, with regard to the rule of law, we are far from anything resembling that.

He condemned statements by Stephen Miller blaming “radical leftist judges” after a recent attack on a judge’s home, describing them as part of a deliberate campaign of fear and intimidation.

He explained that at Cato’s Criminal Justice and Constitutional Studies teams, the teams focus primarily on supporting legal challenges—filing amicus briefs alongside the ACLU and others against actions taken by the current regime.

Pat highlighted the use of Title 32 authority to deploy Red State National Guard units into Democratic-led jurisdictions, warning that such moves have no historical precedent. He noted Oregon’s ongoing appeal in the Ninth Circuit to block these deployments but expressed little optimism given the Supreme Court majority’s use of the “shadow docket” to uphold many of the regime’s actions.

Still, he found hope in resistance from state leaders like California’s Gavin Newsom and Illinois’s J.B. Pritzker, though he acknowledged that their legal tools remain limited.

Pat offered a contrasting perspective on the government shutdown, emphasizing its impact on federal law enforcement agencies. He noted that ICE, FBI, HSI, DEA, and ATF agents are still required to work without pay, warning that prolonged shutdowns could drive many to leave their jobs—perhaps the only peacefully means of ending Trump’s domestic political repression operations.

He stressed that, regardless of political views on the Affordable Care Act, it remains the law and must be funded, as lapses in subsidies would harm many Americans. Pat argued that Congress’s only remaining peaceful mechanism to check executive overreach is the appropriations process.

He said that to rein in an out of control chief executive, it would be necessary for Democrats to take a firm stance by placing strict limits—or cutting funding altogether—for actions such as unauthorized National Guard deployments and aggressive ICE operations. Failure to do so, he warned, would lead the country into “truly dangerous territory.”

Pat warned that recent National Guard deployments ordered by Trump are “pretextual”—a point echoed by Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker. He agreed with Pritzker’s view that these actions are not truly about crime or immigration enforcement, but rather about normalizing the sight of armed troops in American streets, potentially paving the way for their use in “election integrity” operations during the upcoming midterms.

Pat cited the appointment of Heather Honey—an election denier who worked with Cleta Mitchell—to a leadership role in election security at DHS as a deeply troubling sign.

Pat concluded on a somber note. “I am deeply fearful for the future of the country right now,” he said.

He attributed the current crisis to a century-long trend of expanding presidential power, congressional inaction, and excessive judicial deference to the executive branch—lamenting, “unfortunately, this is where it’s brought us.”

## **7. Q&A and Discussions**

## **8. Next Meeting**

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, November 3, 2025, starting 1:55 pm ET/10:55 am PT