

2025/12/01 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2025/12/01

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

1. Updates from CAPAC

Speaker: Judith Teruya, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), 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-aajc.org

- Advancing Justice | AAJC: [Anti-Profilng, Civil Rights & National Security Program](#)

Joanna provided a policy update covering several key areas. She noted that AAJC continues to monitor developments related to the China Initiative and ongoing negotiations in the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations process, particularly with the extended January 30 deadline.

On the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Joanna reported that both chambers have passed their versions of the bill and that AAJC has submitted its official letter to House and Senate Armed Services leadership. She highlighted the Rounds Amendment (No. 3810) as a major area of concern because it would broaden Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) reviews of foreign purchases of certain agricultural lands. She emphasized that AAJC is in active discussions with Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) and others on the Hill to ensure civil rights safeguards are reflected in the final bill.

Joanna also addressed Texas Governor Greg Abbott's recent proclamation labeling The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) a "foreign terrorist organization" and "transnational criminal organization." She stressed that AAJC views this as "an attempt to weaponize state power against a religious minority" and is working with interfaith and civil rights partners to oppose discriminatory actions. She noted that CAIR has already filed a federal lawsuit in response.

She closed by expressing AAJC's appreciation for the APA Justice community and said the organization looks forward to sharing a full 2025 wrap-up in the new year.

3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

Speaker: Gisela Perez Kusakawa, Executive Director, [Asian American Scholar Forum](#) (AASF), gpkusakawa@aasforum.org

[not able to attend]

4. Update from Chinese American Citizens Alliance

Speaker: Kin Yan Hui, National President, [Chinese American Citizens Alliance](#)

Kin Yan Hui was recently elected to be National President of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.). He previously served as National Executive Vice President from 2023 to 2025 and as National Vice President for Membership from 2017 to 2023. He is also a Past President of the San Antonio Lodge.

In his hometown of San Antonio, Kin serves as the Zoning Commissioner for the City of San Antonio's District 6, representing 165,000 residents. He also sits on the Bexar County Civil Service Commission.

A retired civil servant with over 35 years of service in the U.S. Department of the Air Force, Kin concluded his career in 2017 as Chief Engineer for four Air Force Cyber Weapon Systems. In that role, he led a team of more than 75 engineers and technical professionals developing and acquiring advanced cyber capabilities for the Air Force.

Kin holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Houston, a Master of Arts in Management from Webster University, and was an Executive Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

In his remarks, Kin offered a detailed overview of the organization's 130-year history, its national footprint, and his vision for strengthening its role in the Chinese American community. Opening with characteristic humor—"As a good bureaucrat, I have to have PowerPoint slides, so please put up with that"—Kin set a collegial tone before walking the audience through C.A.C.A.'s mission: "to practice and defend Chinese American citizenship and to preserve our cultural and historical heritage, because without historical and cultural preservation, we are not a people."

Kin traced C.A.C.A.'s roots to 1895, when it was founded in San Francisco as the Native Sons of the Golden State. By 1915, it had reorganized under its current name and expanded nationally. He highlighted several moments of historic significance, including the organization's advocacy for repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act, testimony before Congress in the 1940s, efforts that led to the War Brides Act and Chinese Alien Wives Act, and more recent

achievements such as the 2012 Congressional Statement of Regret and the 2018 Congressional Gold Medal awarded to Chinese American World War II veterans. The medal project, Kin recalled, was a challenge—“It was during COVID, and we were having a very difficult time doing that”—but C.A.C.A. persisted and continues to locate families who were unaware of their eligibility.

C.A.C.A. today includes 20 lodges and roughly 3,000 members, historically concentrated along the West Coast but growing rapidly in the South and Southwest. Kin emphasized that while the national board provides guidance and resources, “a lot of the work that’s being done is really at the lodge level.” His vision for the future focuses on restoring prominence, strengthening impact, and ensuring relevance nationwide. Conversations with community leaders, he noted, have helped sharpen that mission: “Not just for the C.A.C.A., but for the greater Chinese American community at large.”

To support this vision, Kin outlined strategic goals: empowering lodges, improving messaging and partnerships, increasing membership, and defending birthright citizenship. Membership development will include a new pipeline, service recognition programs, and a youth advisory council—critical, he noted, because “we are all volunteers, with no paid staff, so we must appreciate every minute we get from volunteers.”

On birthright citizenship, Kin recounted internal skepticism from some members who believed constitutional rights were secure. His response was grounded in risk management: “The risk may be low, but the severity is so high that we have to address it.” C.A.C.A. will establish a dedicated project team to prepare for and respond to potential policy threats.

Kin concluded by reaffirming C.A.C.A.’s long-standing role and future direction: “I just want to introduce the organization...and give you a glimpse into what we are planning to do in the next two years.” He expressed gratitude for the chance to connect with allied organizations and strengthen shared commitments to civil rights, community empowerment, and cultural preservation.

5. Updates from American Civil Liberties Union

- Speaker: [Patrick Toomey](#), Deputy Director, National Security Project, [American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU)

Patrick returned to provide an in-depth briefing on two major areas of ongoing ACLU litigation: the challenge to Florida’s discriminatory housing law (SB 264) in *Shen v. Simpson*, and the national-security–related litigation surrounding the federal government’s use of the Alien Enemies Act. Both issues, he noted, remain of high importance to Asian American communities and immigrant-rights advocates across the country.

Patrick began by reminding the audience that the ACLU is engaged in a wide range of immigration and civil rights litigation, including work related to birthright citizenship, which had

been referenced earlier in the meeting. For purposes of this briefing, however, he focused on the two cases in which he is personally involved.

I. Shen v. Simpson – Florida’s SB 264 Housing Restrictions

Patrick first summarized developments in *Shen v. Simpson*, a challenge to Florida’s SB 264, a law that restricts property ownership by immigrants from China and six other “countries of concern.” The law prohibits non-citizens and non-green-card-holders from these countries from buying property in large parts of Florida, with only narrow exceptions. The ACLU—together with AALDEF, CALDA, the DeHeng Law Firm, Quinn Emanuel, and the ACLU of Florida—represents four individual Chinese immigrant plaintiffs and a real estate company that serves primarily Chinese clients.

On November 4, 2025, a divided panel of the Eleventh Circuit declined to issue a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of SB 264, which Patrick described as “disappointing.” Much of the decision turned on the court’s ruling that the plaintiffs lacked “standing” to challenge the law’s main restriction on property purchases. However, he highlighted an important clarification in the ruling: the court narrowed the law’s application and found that it does not apply to certain Chinese immigrants who live in Florida and intend to remain there indefinitely. That clarification, he explained, provides meaningful—but limited—relief to affected communities.

He emphasized the broader context. SB 264 echoes a long history of “alien land laws” targeting Asians and other immigrant groups under the guise of national security. The ACLU views the law as part of a nationwide resurgence of discriminatory state-level property restrictions, which mirror policies from the early 20th century.

Looking ahead, Patrick explained that next steps remain uncertain. The Eleventh Circuit must first issue a formal order returning the case to the district court. Once that occurs, the ACLU and the state defendants will submit a status update proposing a schedule for next steps in the case. He assured the audience that updates will be provided as the litigation team decides how to move forward in light of the Eleventh Circuit’s decision.

II. Alien Enemies Act Litigation

Patrick then turned to the ACLU’s ongoing challenges to the federal government’s use of the Alien Enemies Act, a 1798 statute allowing deportation of nationals from countries with which the U.S. is at war. In March of this year, he explained, the government used the Act to deport hundreds of Venezuelan nationals. These individuals were transported first to El Salvador and detained in the notorious “Terrorism Confinement Center,” before later being transferred to Venezuela. These individuals had no opportunity to contest their designation or removal under the AEA.

1. The Fifth Circuit Case (for individuals still in the U.S.)

The ACLU represents Venezuelan nationals who remain in the United States and continue to face potential deportation under the Act. In June, the ACLU argued the case before a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit, which issued a 2–1 decision ruling the government’s use of the

Act unlawful. The government then requested an en banc hearing before the full Fifth Circuit, which was granted. Briefing is underway, and oral argument is scheduled for late January. Because the case raises significant questions about executive power and wartime authorities, Patrick noted that Supreme Court review is likely. Importantly, deportations under the AEA are currently paused while the litigation proceeds.

2. District Court Litigation in Washington, D.C. (for individuals already deported)

A second challenge focuses on those who were removed in March with no due process. The ACLU is seeking a new preliminary injunction that would allow deported individuals the opportunity to bring habeas and due-process claims that they were unable to pursue before being transported out of the country. Toomey noted that this group was deported “under cover of darkness,” without notice, hearings, or the ability to consult counsel.

These cases, he stressed, raise profound constitutional questions about due process, wartime authority, and the treatment of immigrant communities. Both remain active and will likely continue into 2026.

Conclusion

Patrick closed by encouraging attendees to stay engaged as litigation moves forward. He invited follow-up questions through the chat or by email and reaffirmed the ACLU’s commitment to defending the civil rights and liberties of immigrant communities targeted by discriminatory laws and emergency powers. The outcomes of these cases, he noted, will have significant implications for Asian American communities, Venezuelan immigrants, and the broader legal landscape governing immigration enforcement.

6. Update from National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

Speaker: [Edgar Chen](#), Special Advisor, [National Asian Pacific American Bar Association](#) (NAPABA)

Edgar Chen, Special Policy Advisor for the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), provided an overview of NAPABA’s recent annual convention and the organization’s broader civil-rights–focused work. He began by thanking APA Justice for the opportunity to share updates and participated in discussion of Florida’s SB 264 during the Q&A.

Edgar explained that NAPABA represents more than 80,000 Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students across the United States, with additional Canadian affiliates. Each year, NAPABA convenes members in a different host city for its annual convention. The 2025 gathering took place in Denver, Colorado, and was NAPABA’s second-largest convention ever, with over 2,800 attendees. He noted that last year’s Seattle convention reached a record 3,400 attendees and featured Governor Gary Locke as an opening speaker.

Edgar highlighted several elements of the Denver convention that intersect with current civil rights issues. Responding to earlier panel discussion about the federal Community Relations Service (CRS), he noted that CRS — often called “the nation’s peacemakers” — has historically had four directors of Asian American descent: Grand Lum, Rose Ochi, Justin Locke, and Julius Nam. Grand Lum participated in a Denver panel on alternative dispute resolution. Edgar also connected other speakers’ points to NAPABA’s recent work, noting, for example, that NAPABA included the Congressional Gold Medal for Chinese American WWII veterans as part of its 2018 lobby-day agenda.

NAPABA’s continuing legal education offerings at the convention spanned more than 43 breakout sessions covering emerging and specialized practice areas, including artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, healthcare law, tariffs, and even Asian American leadership in the outdoor and skiing industries — a nod to the Colorado setting. From this broad program, Edgar emphasized several civil rights sessions that were most relevant to the APA Justice audience. These included programming on birthright citizenship, such as a reenactment of the landmark Wong Kim Ark case; discussions about discrimination against Pacific Islander women; sessions addressing sexual violence; and a program on language access in the wake of the recent rescission of the Clinton-era executive order guaranteeing federal language-access services. The convention also explored book bans and the erosion of intersectional identities in public education and discourse.

Edgar personally moderated a panel on immigration enforcement featuring Greg Chen of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. He summarized the panel’s key conclusion: the central issue currently shaping immigration outcomes is “discretion,” particularly the growing use of negative discretion across U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and other parts of the federal immigration system. He stressed that, beyond ICE, these shifts have implications for refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable communities — especially in the context of the recent shooting in Washington, D.C., which has further intensified national debate over immigration policy and public safety.

The convention also featured a major plenary session with Justice Goodwin Liu of the California Supreme Court and Ajay Mehrotra of the American Bar Foundation. They discussed the “Portrait Project,” a data-driven analysis of AANHPI representation in the legal profession and the barriers that impede career advancement. The research identifies three persistent barriers: lack of mentorship, limited networking infrastructure, and insufficient development of soft skills that are rarely taught in law school but crucial to professional success. Edgar emphasized that first-generation lawyers in particular face challenges in navigating these unwritten rules of the legal profession, and that part of NAPABA’s mission is helping to close these gaps.

He also noted that NAPABA honored several Trailblazers this year, including Committee of 100 member Alan Tse and Rutgers Law Professor Rose Cuison-Villazor, both widely recognized for their leadership and contributions to civil rights and legal scholarship. The convention concluded with a gala featuring an in-depth conversation between actor Rich Ting and journalist Katie Fang — a session Edgar described as especially compelling.

Looking ahead, Edgar announced that the next NAPABA convention will take place in Los Angeles, where attendance could reach 5,000 members. He invited APA Justice participants and interested community members to follow upcoming announcements about the 2026 program.

7. Q&A and Discussions

8. Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, January 5, 2026, starting 1:55 pm ET/10:55 am PT