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2023/02/06 Monthly Meeting Summary Posted



The February 6, 2023, APA Justice monthly meeting summary has been posted at <https://bit.ly/42N0htX>. We thank the following speakers for their updates and discussions:

- **Nisha Ramachandran**, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), provided updates from CAPAC
- **Gisela Kusakawa**, Executive Director, Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF), provided updates from AASF
- **Les Wong**, President Emeritus, San Francisco State University, and **Frank Wu**, President, Queen's College, City University of New York, provided updates on forming a network of Asian American university leaders
- **Michele Young**, Attorney, Michele Young Law; Member of Sherry Chen Legal Team was recognized for her historic achievements in the Sherry Chen case. Michele also shared her thoughts and reflections on Sherry's case and the civil rights and civil liberty concerns in the meeting
- **Gene Wu**, Member, Texas House of Representatives, led the discussion on Asian American groups and other communities across Texas building a coalition to rally against Texas Senate Bill 147 on "Relating to the purchase of or acquisition of title to real property by certain aliens or foreign entities." Video of his portion of the meeting is posted at <https://bit.ly/3DVEuU6> (video 56:48)

Latest Developments on Discriminatory Alien Land Bills Including Louisiana

1. CAPAC Chair Statement on Florida Law Banning Chinese Nationals from Purchasing Land, Need for Federal Legislation



On May 15, 2023, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Chair Rep. **Judy Chu** released the following statement:

“I am incredibly outraged by the signing of SB 264 into law. This is the latest state-level effort to restrict the property ownership of Chinese home seekers, who are aspiring small business owners, students, and families seeking to build better lives for themselves here in America. In addition, SB 264 places a disproportionate burden on current Chinese homeowners who now must register their property with a state agency. And as a result of SB 264, Asian Americans living in Florida will now likely face undue suspicion when purchasing property, including potential racial profiling by realtors, lenders, and other professionals in the real estate industry.

“The government’s scapegoating and stripping of the land ownership rights of Asian American communities are stains on our nation’s history. SB 264 repeats this shameful discrimination and further stokes current anti-Asian sentiment by equating Chinese people with certain immigration statuses as agents of the Chinese Communist Party. That is why I am currently working with CAPAC Housing Task Force Chair Rep. **Al Green** of Texas to introduce a bill to preempt at the federal level such discriminatory state laws, and reaffirm my commitment to ensuring the safety of our communities.”

“Let me be clear—elected officials must be vigilant about addressing specific threats that foreign state-owned enterprises and entities, companies, and individuals with ties to the foreign government pose to our national security, but policies that target and profile individuals and communities because of their national origin, race, ethnicity, or immigration status, however, are discriminatory and wholly unconstitutional. They harken back to nativist anti-Asian alien land laws in the 19th and 20th centuries after Chinese immigrants first arrived here, and later, a xenophobic suspicion of Japanese Americans during World War II that also led to their blanket incarceration. I will continue to fight for the civil rights of our communities, including the right to purchase and own property, and stand up against all attempts to racially profile our communities.”

Read the CAPAC Chair statement: <https://bit.ly/3BvCUtk>

2. Testimony of High School Senior Abigail Hu in Louisiana Legislature



On May 15, 2023, High School Senior **Abigail Hu** testified in the Louisiana State Legislature against [Louisiana House Bill 537](#).

This is a transcript of her testimony:

"Good afternoon Honorable Chairman Miller and distinguished members of the committee,

My name is Abigail Hu. I am a proud product of the Louisiana public school system and a recent high school graduate. I'll be attending college in the fall to study Education and Political Science, and I hope to come back to Louisiana to teach middle and high school in the future.

My parents, Tony and Chloe, have been living in the US for over 22 years. They came here as young students with very little money, looking for an opportunity to work hard, get good jobs, and start a family.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, my dad worked around the clock to help contain the spread of the virus in our city of New Orleans. My brothers and I volunteer regularly, coaching for the local children's sports club, helping clean up our local park, and registering and canvassing voters in our area. I am incredibly grateful to belong to a country that is a fundamental part of who I am.

To us, ownership and belonging are as important as the piece of paper that makes us citizens.

House Bill 537 strips us of such rights—rights to owning a house, education, secured employment, rights to starting the kind of life we sacrifice so much for. It prevents stories like my family's from ever coming to fruition.

This bill tells us that we are not good Americans, we are not Americans deserving of protection under the law, we are not Americans that the legislators we elect care to serve. This bill tells us that we are Americans whose lives are pure political pawns, subject to the whims of the state and condemned to exist under a perpetual instability.

I would like to take some time to address some of the remarks that were made by Representative Hodges. I believe the language in this bill continues to have an anti-immigrant,

xenophobic, fearmongering undertone, regardless of how many amendments we make, it will continue to create suspicion against immigrants and immigrant families in the communities that they live in. It leaves us vulnerable to unlawful investigations, unlawful search and seizure, and loyalty tests by the state.

Representative Hodges has also repeatedly said that it is not about the individual, but under this legislation, any individual can be perceived as connected to a "foreign adversary." If you want a more specific example, anybody who is Chinese can be perceived as "nefarious" and acting on behalf of what Representative Hodges calls the communist tyranny of China.

The vagueness of this bill presents undeniable dangers to not only our Chinese American community, but to any group of people who could be ambiguously tied to what the legislation describes as foreign adversaries or governments. It brands us as enemies of a country that we love so deeply.

This is a civil rights issue, and I urge that the committee to recognize its dire implications and reject the passage of HB 537 before it becomes a civil rights legislation."

Monica Bertagnolli Nominated to Head NIH



According to *Reuters* on May 15, 2023, the Biden administration said it intends to nominate cancer surgeon Dr. **Monica Bertagnolli** to lead the National Institutes of Health (NIH) following a 16-month search for a permanent successor to the agency's long-serving director Dr. Francis Collins, who stepped down in December 2021. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Bertagnolli will become the second woman to lead the NIH, the largest biomedical research agency in the world with a budget of \$45 billion in 2022. NIH falls under the direction of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Read the *Reuters* report: <https://reut.rs/3MvKzYa>

On March 23, 2023, *Science* published an investigative report titled [PALL OF SUSPICION - The National Institutes of Health's "China initiative" has upended hundreds of lives and destroyed 6 scores of academic careers](#) and an editorial titled [Eroding Trust and Collaboration](#). "Given the information available in the public domain, the scientific community could easily conclude that this is a xenophobic program to harm Chinese scientists and cut off international scientific cooperation. The federal government needs to figure out a way to let the NIH and the institutions reassure the community that this is all worth it," the editorial concluded. Read the *Science* report at <https://bit.ly/3oWH1eY> and its editorial at <https://bit.ly/3z24z40>

Heritage Month and Educational Videos/Events

1. White House Forum on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders



The 2023 White House Forum on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

On May 3, 2023, the White House celebrated Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with a community-wide program in Washington, DC. This historic forum on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities features Biden-Harris Administration officials, groundbreaking artists, and trailblazers. Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/3BwrPZ9> (video 4:35:34)

2. Exclusion: The Shared Asian American Experience



According to a video produced by the 1990 Institute, America has been represented as an open society that welcomes immigrants to a land of opportunities. Many immigrants from Asia came to find a better life for their family, escaping from poverty, prosecution, colonialism, and other political atrocities. But America did not receive them with open arms. Throughout history, people from Asia have been excluded, discriminated against, subjected to violence, and prevented from becoming American citizens. Laws were passed that kept them from voting, owning land, marrying the person they loved, and seeing their relatives again. Though coming from different countries and cultures, the pioneering Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Indians, Filipinos, and more Asians who arrived here each faced similar conditions of exclusion, which forged the beginnings of a common, shared Asian experience in America. This educational video takes you through exclusion experiences that Asians endured then and what they continue to face as Americans now.

Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/42I4BLq> (video 17:24)

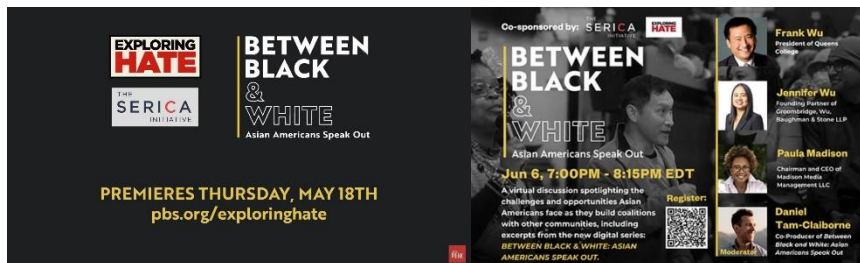
[0:00](#) Introduction

[0:50](#) 19th Century and Prior

[6:36](#) 20th Century

[13:03](#) 1965 Immigration Act

3. "Between Black & White: Asian Americans Speak Out" premieres on PBS



In honor of Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the Sirica Initiative announced its newest film collaboration with WNET/PBS *Between Black & White: Asian Americans Speak Out* is premiering Thursday, May 18, 2023.

The conversation about race in America is often between Black and White, leaving Asian Americans out of the dialogue. *Between Black & White: Asian Americans Speak Out* is a three-part series about communities building bridges, confronting racism, discovering surprising connections, and fighting hate – together.

To celebrate each episode's launch, [three events](#) will be hosted this month, featuring distinguished speakers including President of Queens College, **Frank Wu**; media mogul **Paula Madison**; and first Filipina American Rabbi **Mira Rivera**.

Watch the *Between Black & White* trailer at <https://bit.ly/3pKsZh1> (video 0:35)

4. AANHPI Heritage Month Celebration in Guangzhou, China

**Family and Heritage
Finding Samuel Lowe**

This year, the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2023 Gala honors Paula Williams Madison's work on creating the Finding Samuel Lowe documentary and book and enlightening us on the immigrant experience, family separation, and family connections, all common themes shared by Asian Americans. We are very excited that Paula Williams Madison and Luo Man Kwan will be our keynote speakers at the AANHPI Heritage Month Gala.

Date: Saturday, May 27, 2023
Time: 6:00pm reception, 7:00pm dinner
Venue: The International Ballroom, LN Garden Hotel, GZ, China
Dress code: Business

For tickets, contact selena@fwhonglaw.com

Event Sponsors: Asia Pacific and Americas Network (APAN); Los Angeles-Guangzhou Sister City Association; LN Garden Hotel, GZ

[Los Angeles-Guangzhou Sister City Association](#) and [Asia Pacific and American Network](#) will sponsor the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2023 Gala at the Garden Hotel, Guangzhou, China, on May 27, 2023. The event honors **Paula Williams Madison's** work on creating the Finding Samuel Lowe documentary and book and enlightening the public on the immigrant experience, family separation, and family connections, all common themes shared by Asian Americans. Paula Williams Madison and **Luo Man Kwan** will be keynote speakers.

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