2026/01/05 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2026/01/05

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-Profiling, Civil Rights & National Security Program, Advancing Justice | AAJC, jderman@advancingjustice-aajc.org

- Advancing Justice | AAJC: Anti-Profiling, Civil Rights & National Security Program

Joanna highlighted a major near-term advocacy development following the release of a congressional appropriations "minibus" covering Commerce, Justice, and Science, Energy and Water, and Interior funding. The bill, which recently passed the House, removed language that would have directed the Department of Justice to reinstate the China Initiative, a result she described as a significant victory for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. She emphasized that the outcome reflects sustained coalition advocacy and community engagement raising concerns about the initiative's harmful impact on Chinese American and Asian American scientists, researchers, and scholars. The bill will now move to the Senate.

She noted that coalition partners are preparing a coordinated press statement to coincide with the House floor vote, underscoring continued vigilance against policies that unfairly target Asian American communities. While celebrating the outcome internally, Joanna explained that organizations are being strategic in their public messaging to avoid prompting renewed efforts to reintroduce similar language in future appropriations cycles. She thanked partners for their coordination and persistence, acknowledging that the appropriations process is often opaque and requires sustained, behind-the-scenes engagement to achieve meaningful results.

Joanna also provided a year-end update on advocacy around the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). She reported that Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC and coalition partners successfully blocked seven of the eight harmful provisions they formally opposed, including measures restricting academic research, discriminatory land-use proposals, and provisions targeting LGBTQ+ service members and families. While noting that the final bill

still contained concerning anti-DEI language and was far from perfect, she underscored the progress made in a challenging legislative environment. With the NDAA now signed into law, AAJC will continue monitoring implementation, mitigating harms where possible, and engaging early in the next fiscal year.

3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

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

Gisela reflected on AASF's progress over the past year and thanked the APA Justice team for their early support. She reaffirmed AASF's founding mission to establish a permanent nonprofit that ensures Asian American scholars, researchers, and scientists have a seat at the table, noting that this goal has now been realized. Gisela highlighted AASF's growing national impact in 2025, including reaching more than one billion people through media, research and reports, earning 168 citations in major U.S. media outlets such as NBC News and The Wall Street Journal, and hosting a widely attended annual symposium and ceremony at Stanford University with over 2,300 registrants and senior leaders from science, technology, and public service.

She also emphasized AASF's policy and community engagement efforts, particularly its collaboration with more than 80 nonprofit organizations to block harmful legislation, including provisions in the NDAA's Safe Research Act, and to prevent the return of the China Initiative through the appropriations process. Gisela underscored the importance of faculty leadership in educating policymakers, citing support from almost 700 professors who signed an advocacy letter. Looking ahead, she noted investments in the next generation through the AASF Youth Council, work with the Congressional Commission on a National Museum of Asian Pacific American on history and culture, and continued partnerships to advance a more welcoming America, closing with a preview of an upcoming faculty letter honoring Dr. Jane Wu.

4. Update from Angwang's Attorneys

Speakers:

- Deborah Frankel, Counsel, Bloch & White LLP
- Kyle Bigley, Associate, Bloch & White LLP

  APA Justice Impacted Person: Baimadajie Angwang 昂旺

Former New York Police Department Officer Angwang opened with heartfelt thanks to APA Justice and a broad coalition of advocacy organizations for standing with him. He emphasized

that his case represents more than an individual grievance, describing it as a stand against the unjust treatment of Asian Americans and a message that the community will not remain silent when wronged. Stressing unity and resilience, Angwang said he is committed to fighting not only for himself, but for others who have faced similar experiences or may do so in the future.

Deborah Frankel of the law firm Bloch & White followed by introducing herself, her colleague Kyle Bigley, and the firm's mission to pursue justice-centered litigation rooted in equity, dignity, and accountability. She described Angwang's personal background as an immigrant from China who became a U.S. citizen, served honorably as a U.S. Marine in Afghanistan, and later joined the NYPD, where he earned multiple commendations. Deborah framed his life story as emblematic of the American Dream and the values that should be protected by the legal system.

Deborah then detailed how, in 2020, Angwang was criminally charged and detained by the federal government during the height of the China Initiative and a period of escalating anti-Asian sentiment. Although the case was ultimately dismissed, she described the experience as devastating and deeply traumatizing, particularly given Angwang's vulnerability while incarcerated as a police officer during the COVID-19 pandemic. The harm, she stressed, extended far beyond the dismissal of charges.

Turning to the legal strategy, Deborah explained that the team plans to file claims in federal court under the Federal Tort Claims Act against federal defendants, alleging false arrest, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, abuse of process, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. These claims seek to hold the federal government accountable for misconduct connected to Angwang's prosecution under the China Initiative and to provide a formal avenue for redress.

Deborah also outlined a second category of claims against state defendants, focusing on alleged discrimination and retaliation by the NYPD after Angwang spoke publicly about his mistreatment. She stated that these actions ultimately led to his termination despite a record of commendations, and that additional claims under New York State and City anti-discrimination laws are also being pursued. Kyle echoed the importance of the case and the honor of working on it, emphasizing that the litigation aims not only to secure justice for Angwang, but also to bring broader visibility and accountability to systemic injustices affecting Asian Americans.

5. Review of 2025 and Plan for 2026 from the Committee of 100

Speaker: Paul Cheng, President, Committee of 100

Paul Cheung outlined Committee of 100's priorities for 2026, organized around three strategic pillars: building power and presence, shaping policy and public perception, and strengthening measurable community impact.

Under the first pillar, he emphasized developing the next generation of Chinese American leaders and activating C100 members as a national brain trust. He noted strong interest in the Next Generation Leaders program, with more than 66 applicants across public service, media, technology, academia, and the nonprofit sector. From this pool, 12 fellows will be selected for intensive mentorship, leadership readiness, and direct engagement with C100 members. He also highlighted C100's expanding national presence, including a planned panel at South by Southwest 2026 focused on how U.S. immigration, research, and technology policy decisions shape the global AI race and access to influence.

Paul then described C100's advocacy agenda, centered on producing credible research that counters misinformation, informs policy, and defends civil rights. He announced the release of the third annual State of Chinese Americans national survey, conducted in partnership with NORC at the University of Chicago, with a public webinar briefing scheduled for January 2026. He further noted plans to publish multiple research briefs and host public webinars addressing discrimination trends, including land ownership restrictions, mental health impacts, and national security–driven policies affecting Chinese American communities.

He concluded by highlighting efforts to deepen member engagement and community impact through off-the-record member briefings and expanded regional forums. These initiatives are designed to translate research into local action, strengthen cross-sector relationships, and foster constructive dialogue around U.S.–China relations.

6. Review of 2025 and Plan for 2026 from United Chinese Americans

Speakers:

- Hua Wang 王华, Chair, United Chinese Americans
- Haipei Shue 薛海培, President, United Chinese Americans

Hua Wang and Haipei Shue presented a joint update on UCA's work and future plans, supported by a PowerPoint presentation summarizing key achievements and priorities. Hua Wang reflected on 2025 as an extraordinarily difficult year for Chinese Americans, describing it as a "tale of two Americas" in which the pursuit of the American Dream has increasingly collided with threats to civil rights and community security. He recalled UCA's earlier call to embrace "the civil rights movement of our time," noting how quickly and urgently that theme has become reality. Hua highlighted the strength of the broader UCA ecosystem—including its mental health

initiatives, community foundation, data center, and political arms—and expressed optimism for 2026, which will mark UCA's 10th anniversary and a national convention themed "Thriving Together: Shaping the Future of Chinese Americans."

Haipei then used the presentation to outline UCA's three core mission areas in 2025: youth development, civic and political engagement, and culture, heritage, and identity. He highlighted major youth initiatives, including a highly successful leadership training camp at Georgetown University with students from 33 states, expanded youth-focused grants through the UCA Community Foundation, and preparations to establish a National Association of Chinese American College Students. Haipei also described UCA's role in encouraging civic participation and supporting Chinese American candidates for public office, noting a growing pipeline of younger leaders preparing to run in 2026 with organizational, networking, and financial support.

Looking ahead, Haipei emphasized that UCA's 10th anniversary in 2026 will be a milestone moment, anchored by a major national conference in Las Vegas timed alongside the nation's 250th anniversary. Planned highlights include regional and national convenings, expanded coalition-building across more than 35 states, the first North American Chinese Book Fair, and the recognition of 100 Chinese Americans for their contributions to the United States. He concluded by underscoring UCA's shift toward broader coalition-based community building ("UCA 2.0") and continued investment in youth leadership, civic engagement, and cultural initiatives to strengthen Chinese American communities nationwide.

7. Review of 2025 and Plan for 2026 from OCA National Center

Speakers:

- Sharon Wong, National Chair, OCA National Center
- Thu Nguyen, Executive Director, OCA National Center

Sharon Wong and Thu Nguyen provided a detailed update on OCA's recent work and ongoing priorities, emphasizing the organization's long-standing role as a national social justice and civil rights advocate. Sharon began by thanking APA Justice for the opportunity to present and noted OCA's more than 50 years of collaboration with partner organizations. She highlighted OCA's chapter-based structure as a key strength, allowing the organization to mobilize quickly and effectively on civil rights issues, youth development, and advocacy campaigns. Sharon emphasized that OCA operates through partnerships with other organizations, ensuring that its initiatives are both broad-reaching and community-driven.

Thu then reviewed OCA's major activities in 2025. She highlighted the organization's involvement in three key lawsuits addressing birthright citizenship, voting rights, and other federal policy challenges, in collaboration with Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Washington Lawyers Committee, APIAVote, Campaign Legal Center and Japanese American

Citizens League. Thu also discussed OCA's national convention in Seattle and the summer internship program, which placed students in congressional offices and nonprofits to gain practical advocacy experience. She reaffirmed OCA's continued support for affirmative action and emphasized the importance of educational programs, including panels on citizenship and legal history that explored the historical roots of discriminatory laws affecting Asian Americans.

Looking ahead to 2026, Thu outlined OCA's priorities for the midterm elections, focusing on Get Out the Vote initiatives conducted through its chapters nationwide. These efforts include voter registration, candidate forums for the local API community, and the development of district-level voter guides to help educate voters. She also discussed OCA's annual exit polling collaboration with the Asian American Legal Education Defense Fund (AALDEF) and the need for multilingual volunteers to staff the Asian American Advancing Justice AAPI Voter Hotline. These initiatives are designed to ensure that AAPI voices are heard and accurately represented in the electoral process.

Thu also highlighted a new partnership with the APA Medical Student Association (APAMSA) to support Medical Students National Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., as well as regional advocacy initiatives through state chapters. Sharon closed the remarks by reiterating OCA's mission as a civil rights and social justice organization, stressing the importance of youth and advocacy development, and emphasizing that the organization's effectiveness depends on collaboration with partners and community members.

8. Q&A and Discussions

9. Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, February 2, 2026, starting 1:55 pm ET/10:55 am PT