

2025/03/03 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2025/03/03
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

[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

Joanna reported that AAJC [strongly condemned](#) President Trump's executive order mandating English as the official U.S. language, calling it a racist attack on immigrant communities.

Joanna provided a litigation update, noting that a federal judge in Maryland temporarily blocked key parts of Trump's executive orders targeting DEI initiatives in the Federal government and corporate America, citing constitutional violations and harm to affected individuals and organizations.

AAJC is also tracking land law activities at state and federal levels, particularly in Texas, where lawmakers introduced SB 17 and HB 1849. AAJC is working with NAPABA and other groups to support advocacy efforts. At the federal level, they anticipate alien land bills and are coordinating opposition with allies, including CAPAC.

In addition, reports indicate that the Trump administration plans to invoke the Alien Enemies Act soon, with advocacy groups engaging lawmakers to oppose it. Lastly, Trump nominated John Eisenberg to lead the DOJ's National Security Division, raising concerns about a possible reinstatement of the China Initiative. AAJC is strategizing with partners to monitor his confirmation.

3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

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

Gisela provided an update on AASF's key activities and legislative monitoring efforts. AASF will host its annual multi-day conference at Stanford University in July, culminating on July 26 with the recognition of Nobel laureates and distinguished researchers. This event, often referred to as the "Science Oscars" for Asian Americans, aims to celebrate contributions to American science and foster community engagement. AASF remains committed to empowering scholars through networking and recognition, ensuring a lasting impact across administrations. AASF will also host a virtual town hall to discuss pressing legislative issues affecting the scholar community in 2025.

AASF is actively monitoring legislative developments that could impact Asian American scholars, including the Deterrent Act, which may require reporting of all foreign gifts, and the potential reinstatement of the China Initiative, which has been criticized for racial profiling. The organization is also concerned about the reintroduction of the CCP Act, which could disproportionately target academics with ties to China under national security scrutiny. Another area of concern is the Alien Enemies Act, which could lead to unfair targeting of Chinese American scientists, raising fears of history repeating itself. AASF has supported the Korematsu Bill package to acknowledge and prevent injustices similar to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. AASF remains vigilant against legislation that could promote racial profiling and discrimination under the guise of national security.

AASF is expanding its support initiatives for scholars by launching naturalization clinics to assist with U.S. citizenship applications, thereby providing greater legal protections. It will also offer "Know Your Rights" sessions with attorneys on legal matters, including employment and criminal law. Recognizing the mental health challenges faced by scholars due to political and professional pressures, AASF is increasing its resources to support mental well-being. AASF also celebrated a major legal victory in the case of Yin v. Diaz, which helped prevent discriminatory policies from spreading nationwide. Through these efforts, AASF aims to provide scholars with legal, institutional, and emotional support to navigate an uncertain landscape while advocating for a fair and inclusive academic environment.

In addition to its legislative and legal advocacy, AASF is committed to fostering long-term resilience within the academic and scientific communities. By strengthening partnerships with organizations such as APA Justice, Stop AAPI Hate, and national legal teams, AASF seeks to amplify collective efforts against discriminatory policies and practices. It continues to emphasize the importance of representation, community engagement, and policy reform to safeguard the rights and contributions of Asian American scholars. Looking ahead, AASF remains dedicated to ensuring that academic talent is nurtured and protected, reinforcing the U.S.'s competitive edge in science and technology while upholding principles of fairness and inclusivity.

4. The Institute for America, China, and the Future of Global Affairs

Speaker: Jessica Chen Weiss, Founding Faculty Director of the Institute for America, China, and the Future of Global Affairs (ACF), SAIS, Johns Hopkins University

- ACF: [Getting China Right at Home](#)
- 2025/02/14 [SAIS launches new Institute on U.S.-China relations](#)

Jessica introduced the newly launched Institute for America, China, and the Future of Global Affairs (ACF). Established in February 2025, ACF aims to enhance the rigor and depth of public and policy discussions on China, emphasizing civil liberties, inclusiveness, and democracy as central to U.S. foreign policy.

Unlike other China-focused think tanks, ACF seeks to foster evidence-based dialogue among experts and practitioners while remaining neutral on policy stances. The institute was launched alongside the report "Getting China Right at Home," a collection of essays by 15 experts, including contributions from Gisella Perez Kusakawa of Asian American Scholar Forum and Patrick Toomey of ACLU. Seven of the 15 essays in the conceptions of grappling with China address issues of civil liberties, transnational oppression, and discrimination against Asian Americans.

ACF seeks to fill a gap in Washington's foreign policy conversations by addressing the domestic consequences of U.S.-China relations, ensuring that civil rights and inclusivity are not sidelined. Jessica emphasized that these issues are not merely collateral damage but are fundamental to formulating sound China policies.

There are headwinds, but the institute operates under four guiding principles: rigor in research, humility in acknowledging complexity, civility in discussions, and creativity in forward-thinking solutions. This approach is intended to bridge academia and policymaking, fostering long-term strategies that account for both national security and civil liberties.

This spring, ACF will focus on disseminating its research findings through meetings with congressional offices, government agencies, and policy stakeholders to encourage two-way dialogue. The institute will also launch an ideas series spotlighting key policy areas while cultivating a new generation of experts who integrate academic insights with practical policymaking.

Jessica underscored the importance of maintaining open academic spaces for constructive discussions, ensuring that universities continue to contribute to informed policy debates. Through these initiatives, ACF aims to provide a central platform for nuanced, fact-based conversations on U.S.-China relations and their broader societal implications.

5. Introduction to Stand with Asian Americans

Speakers:

- Michelle Lee, President and General Counsel, Stand with Asian Americans
- Brian Pang, Chief Operating Officer and Head of Partnerships, SwAA

Michelle and Brian introduced Stand with Asian Americans (SwAA) – a nonprofit launched in 2021 to empower Asian Americans in asserting their civil rights and liberties. The organization focuses on actively combating workplace discrimination by providing legal representation and strategic litigation against employment injustices. SwAA aims to drive systemic change and ensure accountability through legal action, education, and community support.

Mike Roberts is SwAA's new Legal Director.

SwAA was founded in response to rising anti-Asian discrimination, particularly after the 2021 Atlanta Spa shootings. It published an open letter in the Wall Street Journal titled "Enough." The letter went viral, signed by over 9,000 leaders in business, entertainment, sports, and government, including former Presidents of the United States.

SwAA's leadership have all experienced discrimination at work and in their businesses; they have all taken action and obtained favorable outcomes.

The organization initially engaged in broad advocacy efforts, including anti-hate initiatives, civic empowerment, and corporate activism. Over time, recognizing the limited resources and lack of dedicated support for workplace discrimination cases, SwAA refined its mission in 2023 to concentrate on employment and economic justice.

SwAA combats workplace discrimination through three main pillars:

- Legal Representation – Building a legal team to strategically select and litigate cases that expose and challenge workplace discrimination.
- Community and Education – Providing resources such as know-your-rights workshops, social media awareness campaigns, and a monthly invite-only support group for those experiencing discrimination.
- Policy and Advocacy – Partnering with civil rights organizations, law schools, and legal clinics to advocate for legislative and policy reforms at state and federal levels.

Despite its impact, SwAA faces challenges in securing funding. Traditional corporate and government sponsors often lack awareness of the importance of workplace discrimination

efforts for Asian Americans. To operate effectively, SwAA estimates an annual budget of \$1 million and seeks support from donors, partners, and community networks.

SwAA encourages individuals to report workplace discrimination through its online portal, participate in its programs, and share its mission within their networks. The organization remains committed to advocating for Asian Americans in employment across all industries, including government, academia, and private sectors.

For support or involvement, SwAA can be reached at

- <https://standwithasianamericans.com/>
- hello@standwithasianamericans.com
- (415)-234-0710, and
- Social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)

Michelle and Brian's presentation is located here: <https://bit.ly/4iKZgLO>

6. Update from the Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance

Speaker: Clay Zhu, Co-Founder, Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance 华美维权同盟 (CALDA)

- 2025/02/11 CALDA: [开年捷报 · 佛州联邦法官即将颁布临时禁令暂停 SB 846 恶法!](#)
- [Yin v. Diaz \(1:24-cv-21129\)](#)

Clay returns to provide updates on ongoing civil rights litigation concerning discriminatory laws against Chinese Americans, particularly in Florida. Representing CALDA, an organization focused on legal challenges against government discrimination, Clay emphasized the broad scope of their work in contrast to SwAA and other organizations that address workplace discrimination.

Clay's update covered two major legal battles: Florida's Alien Land Law (SB 264) and SB 846, which targets Chinese students and universities.

SB 264, a measure enacted nearly two years ago, is widely seen as part of the political positioning for the Florida Governor's presidential bid. This law has been challenged in federal court by CALDA in collaboration with the ACLU and other organizations. The case is currently before the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, with a decision anticipated in the next couple months. Clay stressed that the ruling will have far-reaching implications, as it is the first appellate-level decision on such a state law. Given its higher legal authority, the ruling could influence similar laws in other states, particularly Texas, where similar measures are under consideration.

The second major case pertains to Florida's SB 846, which prohibits universities from forming agreements with Chinese entities. In practice, this has led to the termination of Chinese graduate students' assistantship roles, severely impacting their academic and professional development.

For students working towards a master or Ph.D. degree, it is essential for them to working for the supervising professors as a graduate assistants, so that they can go into the lab and work on real life projects and be able to collaborate on academic papers.

SB 846 basically bans all the international students from China to be graduate students at universities in Florida.

CALDA promptly filed a lawsuit challenging this law. Recently, a magistrate judge ruled in favor of one of CALDA's arguments, stating that Florida's law interferes with federal immigration authority. The judge accepted the argument that the law overreaches state power by infringing upon federal immigration regulations. However, the court did not rule in favor of the claim that the law is racially discriminatory.

The case is now under review by a district court judge, who is expected to issue a decision in the next one to two months. Given historical precedent, it is likely that the district court judge will adopt the magistrate judge's recommendations. Nevertheless, Florida is expected to appeal the ruling, which would bring the case before the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, similar to the Alien Land Law case.

Looking ahead, Clay noted that CALDA is closely monitoring legislative developments in Texas. If Texas enacts laws similar to SB 264 or SB 846, the organization is prepared to launch legal challenges to prevent further discriminatory measures. The outcomes of these lawsuits will not only shape the legal landscape in Florida but also set critical precedents that could influence policy decisions and judicial interpretations in other states.

Through these legal battles, CALDA continues to advocate for the rights of Chinese Americans, ensuring that unconstitutional and discriminatory policies are challenged in court. Clay's update highlights the ongoing efforts to protect civil rights and the broader implications of these cases for immigrant communities nationwide.

7. Q&A and Discussions

8. Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting will be held on April 7, 2025, starting at 1:55 pm ET/10:55 am PT