

# In This Issue #316

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## Reminder: Webinar on Fair Housing Rights and Alien Land Laws Today

The graphic is split into two main sections. The left section has a yellow background and lists the webinar's title, date, time, and speakers: Cindy Tsai (Interim President, Committee of 100), Hope Atuel (CEO/Executive Director, Asian Real Estate Association of America), Scott Chang (Senior Counsel, The National Fair Housing Alliance), John Trasvina (Former HUD Assistant Secretary, Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity), and Jeremy Wu (Founder and Co-Organizer, APA Justice). It also includes logos for the Committee of 100 and APA Justice, and a registration link: <https://bit.ly/4hEouum>. The right section has a dark blue background with the NFHA logo and text: 'Fair Housing Rights and Alien Land Laws: Challenges and Advocacy for the Asian American Community', 'Committee of 100 Webinar', and 'Scott Chang, National Fair Housing Alliance March 4, 2025'.

Today, March 4, 2025, starting at 4:00 pm ET, the Committee of 100 and APA Justice will co-host a webinar on Fair Housing Rights and Alien Land Laws. With new laws limiting property ownership based on nationality, real estate professionals and advocates are stepping up to challenge these discriminatory policies. This webinar will provide critical insights into how these restrictions are reshaping the housing landscape and what we can do to fight back.

Register to attend: <https://bit.ly/4hEouum>

## NYT: Professor Franklin Tao Sues to Get His Job Back

The image shows a screenshot of a New York Times article. The article title is 'Professor, Scrutinized for Ties to China, Sues to Get His Job Back'. The byline is 'Feng Tao, who was tenured at the University of Kansas, was cleared of charges brought under a discontinued Trump program aimed at Chinese spying.' To the right of the text is a portrait of Franklin Tao, a man with glasses wearing a white shirt and a red tie. Further to the right is a sidebar with the name 'Franklin Tao 陶丰' and a list of legal case details: 'Docket ID: 2:19-cr-20052', 'District Court, D. Kansas', 'Date filed: Aug 21, 2019', 'Date ended: January 18, 2023', '10th Circuit Appeals Court', 'Appellate Case 23-3013', and 'Acquittal: July 11th, 2024'.

According to the [New York Times](#) on March 2, 2025, **Feng "Franklin" Tao**, a former University of Kansas professor, has filed a lawsuit against the university, alleging wrongful termination and violations of his civil rights. This legal action follows a series of events stemming from the U.S. Department of Justice's now-defunct "China Initiative," which aimed to counter economic espionage but shifted to target individuals of Asian descent.

Arrested in 2019 as the first professor charged under the China Initiative, Dr. Tao fought allegations of failing to disclose ties to a Chinese university. After five years, a federal appeals court overturned his lone conviction, yet the University of Kansas has refused to reinstate him.

Dr. Tao argues the university engaged in fearmongering and racial profiling, prioritizing political pressure over due process.

Despite the official end of the China Initiative in 2022, Congress is now considering legislation to investigate Chinese espionage, with proposals for a "CCP Initiative" that could reignite racial targeting of Chinese researchers.

Some lawmakers have also raised concerns about the large number of Chinese students studying science and engineering on American campuses. Senator **James Risch**'s assertion that "each [Chinese student] is an agent of the Chinese Communist Party" exemplifies the continued stigmatization of Chinese academics and students.

**Gisela Perez Kusakawa**, executive director of the Asian American Scholar Forum, warns against indiscriminate policies, urging for measured, evidence-based responses rather than racial profiling. "There are real, genuine threats that need to be addressed, but we should not be using a sledgehammer on the issue — we should be using a scalpel," she said.

"We can't choose the country where we were born, where we came from," said Dr. Tao's wife **Hong Peng**, an American citizen. "What we have experienced, this is completely racial profiling."

Read the *New York Times* report: <https://nyti.ms/3XoR76S>. Read Dr. Tao's story: <https://bit.ly/4i0WZLw>

## 03/12 MSU Webinar: The China Initiative

An Asian Pacific American Studies Webinar:  
**The China Initiative**  
 Policy, Practice, and the Asian American Critique

Dr. Jeremy Wu  
 APA Justice

Dr. Lok Siu  
 UC, Berkeley

Wednesday, March 12th  
 5 - 6:30pm

Join us on Zoom as we discuss the life and afterlife of The China Initiative, a Trump Administration program that has targeted Asian American scholars and researchers for investigation.

Register Here:  
<https://bit.ly/4hValTO>

3/2/2025

## China Initiative: Past and Present

### 中国行动的前世今生

Michigan State University  
 Asian Pacific American Studies Program Webinar

Jeremy Wu, Ph.D.  
 Founder and Co-Organizer, APA Justice

March 12, 2025

[Jeremy.S.Wu@gmail.com](mailto:Jeremy.S.Wu@gmail.com)

On March 12, 2025, please join the webinar hosted by Michigan State University's Asian Pacific American Studies Program for an insightful discussion of the past and present of the China Initiative, a Trump administration program that targeted Asian American scholars and researchers for investigation and prosecution. Dr. **Lok Siu** of UC Berkeley and Dr. **Jeremy Wu** of APA Justice will speak at the event moderated by Dr. **Kent Weber** of Michigan State University.

Register to attend: <https://bit.ly/4hValTO>

## U.S. Early-Career Scientists Struggle Amid Chaos

IN BRIEF  
 Edited by Jeffrey Brauer

At a rally last week, Janna Williams protested calls at NIH, saying they could harm her brother, who has been receiving treatment there for the past year.

TRUMP TRACKER  
 Confusion, woe deepen over White House's science squeeze

Register Login

March 03, 2025

### Researchers in 'Limbo' as Trump Battles Courts

Despite court orders blocking Trump's federal funding freeze, bans on DEI and other executive mandates, academic researchers are still in the dark on what all of it could mean for their careers and the pace of scientific discovery.

According to [Science](#) on February 21, 2025, early-career researchers in the United States are facing significant challenges due to recent federal funding uncertainties under the Trump administration.

The administration's funding freezes, DEI grant cancellations, and federal scientist firings have created widespread instability.

Researchers who had been awarded NIH "diversity" fellowships are left in limbo, while NSF postdoc programs supporting underrepresented groups were suddenly canceled. Some

applicants only learned their programs were deleted through automated rejection emails.

The USDA and U.S. Geological Survey rescinded job offers and terminated early-career scientists, leaving them with financial hardship and no immediate job prospects. One scientist, who envisioned a 20-year career at USDA, now faces an uncertain future.

Some worry that race- and gender-related research—such as a study on maternal mortality disparities—could now be flagged under Trump's executive orders restricting DEI.

As funding delays mount, researchers face not only financial uncertainty but also structural barriers. Universities, forced to anticipate prolonged funding cuts, have begun reducing faculty hiring and graduate student admissions.

Early-career scientists fear a missing generation of researchers—one that could take years, if not decades, to recover. Institutions are under growing pressure to support affected researchers and prevent long-term damage to the U.S. scientific workforce.

Experts warn that sustained instability could weaken the U.S.'s global leadership in science and innovation, pushing talent overseas and reducing America's research output in critical fields.

According to [Nature](#) on February 24, 2025, some early-career researchers are considering changing jobs, leaving the country or abandoning research altogether.

“Disruption and uncertainty are the enemy of science,” says **Donna Ginther**, an economist at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. And when disruption and uncertainty strike, she adds, “the people who lose their jobs are students and postdocs.” If that happens now, science in the United States could undergo its own generational shift, she says: “Early-career scientists are the future.”

According to [Inside Higher Ed](#) on March 3, 2025, federal judges have temporarily blocked many of President Trump's executive actions, but researchers relying on federal grants are still facing significant disruptions. University scientists working on critical medical research are caught in bureaucratic limbo as Trump's administration delays funding and enforces strict policies targeting DEI initiatives.

“My grant's future is in limbo,” said neuroscientist **Eve Marder**, whose NIH funding has been stalled due to the cancellation of advisory council meetings. Without approval, she fears shutting down her lab: “If I don't get another source of money in the next six months, I'll have to shut my lab.”

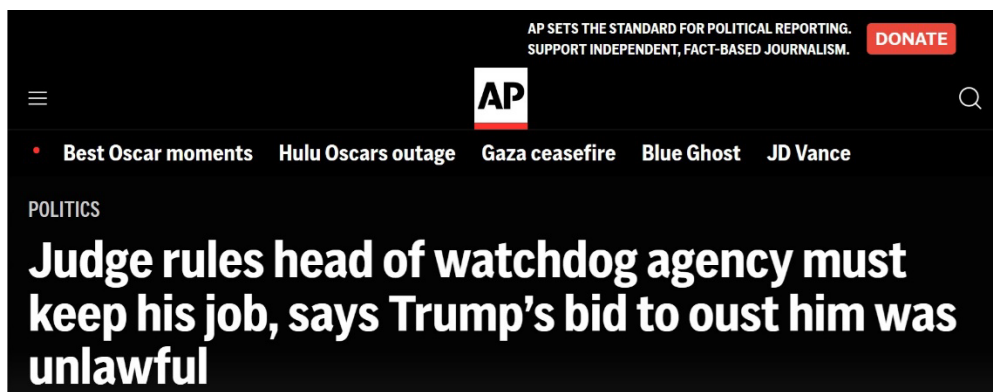
NSF and NIH have slowed or halted funding processes. Advisory councils have not met since January, preventing new grants from being approved and stalling \$1.5 billion in medical research funding. Astrophysics postdoc **Adrian Fraser** shared his frustration over the

uncertainty: “Things aren’t clearly defined from the top, so it becomes a messy game of telephone ... No one knows what is considered DEI-related.”

Meanwhile, universities are preparing for prolonged funding cuts. **Jeremy Berg**, former NIH director, suggests the administration may be stalling funding as a hidden budget-cutting tactic: “Effectively a way of cutting the NIH budget without cutting the NIH budget.” If unspent by September 30, allocated funds must be returned to the U.S. Treasury, raising concerns about whether the administration is intentionally withholding money despite congressional approval.

If funding restrictions persist, many early-career scientists may be forced to abandon research or leave the U.S., posing a serious threat to the nation’s scientific progress, global competitiveness, and long-term innovation.

## Judge Rules Trump’s Firing of Head of Special Counsel was Unlawful



As of March 3, 2025, the number of lawsuits against President **Donald Trump**'s executive actions reported by the [Just Security Litigation Tracker](#) has grown to 96.

According to [AP News](#), [Fox](#), and multiple media reports, one key case, [Dellinger v. Bessent \(1:25-cv-00385\)](#), resulted in U.S. District Judge **Amy Berman Jackson** ruling that Trump’s attempt to remove **Hampton Dellinger** as head of the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) was unlawful.

Dellinger, fired on February 5 despite legal protections limiting presidential removal to cases of inefficiency, neglect, or malfeasance, sued for reinstatement. Judge Jackson’s ruling temporarily restored him to his position, warning that unchecked presidential removal of the Special Counsel would undermine protections for federal employees, including whistleblowers.

“The Special Counsel is supposed to withstand the winds of political change and help ensure that no government servant of either party becomes the subject of prohibited employment practices or faces reprisals for calling out wrongdoing,” Judge Jackson wrote in her decision.

The Trump administration quickly appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. The Supreme Court previously allowed Dellinger to remain in his role pending litigation.

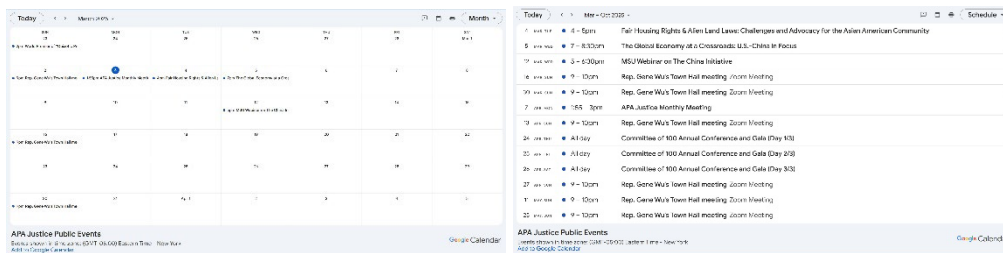
Beyond his own case, Dellinger has challenged the administration’s mass termination of probationary federal workers, arguing some firings may have been illegal. In addition, the OSC enforces the Hatch Act, which limits partisan political activities by government employees—an issue drawing scrutiny as Trump administration officials continue publicly endorsing his policies.

The ruling comes as Dellinger is challenging the removal of probationary workers who were fired as part of the Trump administration’s massive overhaul of the government. A federal board has halted the terminations of several probationary workers after Dellinger said their firings may have been unlawful.

The ruling is a major legal setback for Trump’s efforts to reshape the federal workforce. It underscores the ongoing battle over protections for whistleblowers and civil servants. The case will likely have broader implications as Trump seeks to expand executive power.

## News and Activities for the Communities

### 1. APA Justice Community Calendar



#### Upcoming Events:

2025/03/04 Fair Housing Rights & Alien Land Laws: Challenges and Advocacy for the Asian American Community

2025/03/05 The Global Economy at a Crossroads: U.S.-China in Focus

2025/03/12 MSU Webinar on China Initiative

2025/03/16 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting

2025/03/30 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting

2025/04/07 APA Justice Monthly Meeting  
2025/04/13 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting  
2025/04/24-26 Committee of 100 Annual Conference and Gala  
2025/04/27 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting

Visit <https://bit.ly/3XD61qV> for event details.

## 2. 11-year-old Student Took His Own Life After Repeated Bullying

COURTS AND JUSTICE

### 11-year-old Akron student took his own life after repeated bullying, suspension, lawsuit says

Updated: Feb. 28, 2025, 6:10 p.m. | Published: Feb. 27, 2025, 12:26 p.m.



The parents of Abyesh Thulung sued Akron Public Schools over the 11-year-old boy's death. Courtesy of The Sweeney Law Firm

According to [Cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com) on February 28, 2025, the parents of an 11-year-old boy in Akron filed a federal lawsuit, [Gurung v. Akron Public Schools District Board of Education \(5:25-cv-00374\)](#) in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

The [41-page complaint](#) alleges that **Abyesh Thulung**, born in a Bhutanese refugee camp in Nepal and U.S. citizen, died by suicide after enduring relentless racial bullying at Akron's National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF) Middle School. He was reportedly harassed online and at school, including being called racial slurs like "Ching Chong" and physically assaulted multiple times. Throughout the year, he visited the school nurse 11 times—four for injuries from attacks, the rest for stress-induced headaches and stomach pain.

Despite clear signs of distress, the lawsuit claims school officials failed to intervene and, instead, punished Abyesh when he tried to defend himself. In addition, the Akron Public School District allegedly destroyed surveillance footage of a key incident leading up to his death and withheld parts of his educational records from his family.

The lawsuit argues that the school's negligence, failure to enforce anti-bullying policies, and disregard for Abyesh's safety directly contributed to his tragic death.

## 3. The Global Economy at a Crossroads: U.S.-China in Focus

TEACHERS WORKSHOP

**THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AT A CROSSROADS:  
U.S.-CHINA IN FOCUS**



**Yuen Yuen Ang**  
Johns Hopkins University  
Professor of Political Economy  
*Speaker*



**Andy Rothman**  
Sinology LLC  
Founder and CEO  
*Speaker*



**Clay Dube**  
University of Southern California  
U.S.-China Institute Senior Fellow  
*Moderator*


**March 5** | 4 pm PT  
7 pm ET


**WHAT:** The Global Economy at a Crossroads: U.S.-China in Focus

**WHEN:** March 5, 2025, 7:00 pm ET/4:00 pm PT

**WHERE:** Webinar

**HOST:** 1990 Institute and sponsors

**Moderator:** **Clay Dube**, Director Emeritus and Senior Fellow, USC U.S.-China Institute

**Speakers:**

- **Yuen Yuen Ang**, Alfred Chandler Chair Professor of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University
- **Andy Rothman**, Founder and CEO of Sinology LLC

**DESCRIPTION:** The U.S. and China represent the two largest economies in the world, with deeply interconnected yet often competing interests. Their economic relationship involves trade, investment, and technology exchanges, shaped by regulatory, cultural, and geopolitical factors. This workshop will explore the economic interdependencies between these two powers and provide a discussion into the impact of these unique yet interwoven economic landscapes.

**REGISTRATION:** <https://bit.ly/3Qlqdms>

###

APA Justice Task Force is a non-partisan platform to build a sustainable ecosystem that addresses racial profiling concerns and to facilitate, inform, and advocate on selected issues related to justice and fairness for the Asian Pacific American community. For more information, please refer to the new APA Justice website under development at [www.apajusticetaskforce.org](http://www.apajusticetaskforce.org). We value your feedback. Please send your comments to [contact@apajustice.org](mailto:contact@apajustice.org).