

2025/08/04 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2025/08/04

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](#)

1. Monitoring of China Initiative Language in CJS Appropriations Report

Joanna reaffirmed Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC’s vigilance in tracking attempts to reintroduce elements of the discontinued China Initiative through language in the Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee report. The China Initiative was widely criticized for encouraging racial profiling, particularly of individuals of Chinese descent in academic and scientific communities.

AAJC is working with partner organizations to oppose any provisions that attempt to revive these discriminatory practices.

2. Advocacy Letter to Congress

A joint letter—led by AAJC in partnership with Stop AAPI Hate, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), and the Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF)—was submitted to Congress, urging the removal of harmful language tied to the China Initiative. However, the full Appropriations Committee vote has been postponed until after the House returns from the August recess. AAJC plans to recirculate the letter to gather additional organizational endorsements in the interim.

Groups that missed the initial tight turnaround are encouraged to sign on during this extended opportunity.

3. Clarification on West Virginia Land Law – HB 2961

AAJC addressed concerns regarding HB 2961, a land law enacted in West Virginia on April 28, 2025, which has raised questions among community organizations.

The law defines a "prohibited foreign party" to include individuals from China, but the ban applies only to those acting on behalf of foreign-owned entities—not individuals purchasing land for personal use. It affects all types of real estate, including mineral rights, when transactions involve entities under foreign control. In the event of a violation, the law allows six months for divestment, enforced by state courts and the West Virginia Attorney General.

AAJC remains committed to defending the rights of Asian American communities and is actively engaged in legislative advocacy to combat discriminatory policies. Organizations are urged to stay informed, join collective efforts, and support ongoing monitoring and response strategies.

3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

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

[not able to attend]

5. Updates on Ohio State Legislations

Speaker: Munira Abdullahi, Member, Ohio House of Representatives

- [HB1 Enact Ohio Property Protection Act \(2025\)](#)
- [SB88 Enact the Ohio Property Protection Act \(2025\)](#)

Representative Munira Abdullahi, serving the Columbus area, is the first Muslim, the first Somali, and the youngest currently serving Democratic member of the Ohio House of Representatives. She has addressed the challenges facing immigrant communities and progressive lawmakers in Ohio's political landscape, offering a unique and vital perspective on the intersection of immigration policy, local governance, and grassroots organizing.

Ohio remains a politically conservative state with significant Republican control. The state legislature is heavily gerrymandered, resulting in Democrats holding only 34 of the 99 seats in the House—placing them in a super minority. This imbalance has facilitated the introduction and advancement of numerous bills that are “hateful” and harmful to marginalized communities.

Several bills currently under consideration in Ohio have raised significant concerns among immigrant advocates and progressive lawmakers. These include:

- **House Bill 200 and House Bill 26:** These measures would prohibit Ohio cities from enacting sanctuary policies that protect residents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity. Additionally, they threaten to withdraw state funding from municipalities that do not comply.
- **House Bill 281:** This bill mandates that hospitals adhere to federal immigration enforcement protocols, undermining their traditional role as safe spaces where individuals—regardless of immigration status—seek critical healthcare.
- **House Bill 1:** Positioned as a legislative priority, HB 1 seeks to restrict immigrants from owning land within 25 miles of "critical infrastructure," which includes military bases, utility lines, water systems, and airports. The law would primarily affect individuals from countries designated as adversaries by the U.S. Secretary of State—currently including China, Venezuela, North Korea, Russia, and Iran. The bill is expected to disproportionately impact Ohio's Chinese and other immigrant communities, particularly small business owners and property holders.

Upon the introduction of HB 1, immediate and coordinated opposition emerged from advocacy organizations and community members statewide. The Asian community mobilized hundreds of written and in-person testimonies at the Ohio Statehouse. Their swift response disrupted the typical legislative process, in which such bills often pass without public scrutiny. The committee chair permitted extended public input—an uncommon courtesy in such settings. Due to this intense public engagement, HB 1 has been temporarily halted. The bill's sponsor, reportedly frustrated by the backlash, launched a petition to remove the committee chair—a move seen as reactionary.

Rep. Abdullahi attributes this success to strategic, people-powered organizing, which included:

- Coordinated mass emails and phone campaigns. **Work smart, not just hard.** Don't just call any representative—call the right ones.
- Providing scripts and resources to facilitate public engagement.
- Encouraging physical presence at hearings, even from those not testifying.
- Elevating media coverage through press events and rallies.

Rep. Abdullahi emphasizes the importance of targeted and sustained engagement. According to her, while calls to supportive legislators are appreciated, real impact is achieved by focusing pressure on committee chairs and bill sponsors—especially those advancing harmful legislation.

She also stresses the need for long-term momentum, warning against complacency even when a bill appears stalled. Continued advocacy ensures legislators remain accountable and aware of public scrutiny.

A key tool for activists, mentioned by Rep. Abdullahi, is **ohiobills.wtf**, a bill tracker provided by **Ohioans Against Extremism**. The platform offers up-to-date information on pending legislation, action items, and guides on how to support or oppose bills effectively.

Rep. Abdullahi concluded her talk by encouraging collective action and mutual support, highlighting the importance of rest and sustainability in advocacy work.

As Chair of the Ohio Women's Caucus, she invited individuals and groups to reach out for assistance with organizing efforts, press events, and policy drafting.

Her message centered on a return to community-based traditions of solidarity, stating: “Our power is in our numbers. Our power is in our diversity... Rest is part of the work. We need every single person in this fight.”

6. Updates on North Carolina State Legislations

Speaker: Guangya Liu, Member, North Carolina House of Representatives

- [H133 NC Farmland and Military Protection Act \(2025\)](#)
- [S338 NC Farmland and Military Protection Act \(2025\)](#)
- [S394 Prohibit Foreign Ownership of NC Land \(2025\)](#)
- [S504 NC Farmland and Military Protection Act \(2025\)](#)

[not on record]

7. Update from the U.S. Heartland China Association

Speaker: Min Fan, Executive Director, U.S. Heartland China Association

- U.S. Heartland China Association [website](#)
- 2025/07/29 Webinar: [From Heartland to Mainland: 2025 Future Ag Leaders Delegation](#)

The U.S. Heartland China Association (USHCA) is a bipartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering constructive engagement between the U.S. Heartland and China. Contrary to assumptions based on its name, the organization was not founded by Chinese Americans. It was established by the late U.S. Senator Adlai Stevenson of Illinois and is now chaired by former Missouri Governor Bob Holden. USHCA explicitly does not engage in lobbying or political advocacy, adhering strictly to its nonprofit charter.

USHCA serves as a neutral platform to promote dialogue, education, cultural exchange, and economic engagement between Middle America and China. The organization recognizes that many communities in the Heartland—particularly rural areas and underserved minority populations—have historically had limited access to international and cross-cultural education, especially regarding China. USHCA seeks to fill this gap by connecting communities, promoting awareness, and building people-to-people ties.

Min is the first Chinese American to lead USHCA. When she joined the association at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, USHCA had limited ties to the broader Chinese American community, despite its long-standing role as a cultural and diplomatic bridge. By partnering with national Chinese American networks, USHCA led a large-scale PPE relief effort. Over 800,000 pieces of PPE were collected and distributed across the Heartland, including to rural and underserved health clinics. This initiative helped address severe shortages and brought together volunteers through state agencies and nonprofit groups. It also introduced many Heartland residents to Chinese Americans for the first time—a transformative experience for all involved.

Min recognized the need to explain why U.S.-China relations matter at the local level. USHCA publishes a comprehensive report, "Why U.S.-China Relations Matter to the Heartland," that quantifies the multifaceted relationship that each of the 21 states in the Heartland region has with China, such as:

- Hundreds of millions (up to half a billion dollars in some cases) contributed by Chinese international students to state economies.
- Jobs created through Chinese investment and exports.
- Historical ties between Heartland communities and China dating back generations.

Although the report does not constitute political advocacy, it has become a practical tool for local stakeholders, elected officials, and educators to explain the relevance of U.S.-China relations in concrete, community-focused terms.

Beyond policy and economic dialogue, USHCA supports cultural exchange and education. It promotes the work of Chinese language teachers in Heartland states like Kentucky and Missouri—even as demand for Mandarin instruction declines nationally. The association also supports cultural projects, such as the "Far East Deep South" [documentary tour along the Mississippi River](#), to strengthen cultural awareness of the long history of Chinese Americans in the Mississippi River basin community.

A centerpiece of USHCA's current efforts is the **Yangtze-Mississippi Regional Dialogue**, launched in 2023. This subnational diplomacy initiative connects local leaders in the Heartland with their counterparts in China. The first round included six U.S. mayors visiting China to initiate discussions on economic development, climate resilience, and public health. In 2024, a reciprocal delegation from China visited Memphis, Tennessee, where the original U.S. mayors and other community leaders hosted a series of dialogues. In 2025, the third round of this initiative is set to take place in Wuhan, Hubei Province—a symbolic and strategic location. These dialogues are deliberately kept out of the media spotlight to ensure continuity and a neutral learning experience for the American delegates.

USHCA, like many organizations working in the U.S.-China space is operating under increasing political scrutiny from both sides. The association has faced indirect attacks by groups such as State Armor. Some of the U.S. mayors who previously participated in USHCA-led trips to China had experienced harassment on social media or being criticized by their political opponents.

These developments underscore a broader trend where China-related efforts — even cultural or educational — are weaponized in political discourse, especially during election cycles. Due to the expiration of its initial grant funding, USHCA is now reaching out to the community for two key forms of support:

- **Leadership Identification:** Helping the organization identify open-minded local officials and civic leaders interested in engaging with Chinese counterparts.
- **Financial Support:** Providing or sourcing funding to allow local delegations to continue participating in the Yangtze-Mississippi Dialogue and other exchange programs.

Despite political headwinds, USHCA continues to witness strong interest from local leaders across the Heartland. Many mayors and nonprofit leaders are eager to address shared global challenges—including climate change, healthcare access, and economic revitalization—through international cooperation. USHCA believes these dialogues can promote a more nuanced

understanding and help reshape the narrative surrounding China, shifting away from confrontation and toward mutual understanding and stability.

USHCA remains a critical actor in maintaining and nurturing people-to-people diplomacy at a time of strained U.S.-China relations. Through programs like the Yangtze-Mississippi Dialogue, cultural education efforts, and community-driven initiatives, the organization continues to serve as a rare but vital bridge between the American interior and one of the world's most consequential nations.



4. Update on Will Kim

Speaker: **Youngwoon Han**, Network & Organizing Director, National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)

On July 21, NAKASEC received an urgent call from the brother of Will Kim, who had been detained at San Francisco International Airport. Will Kim, a longtime U.S. resident who has lived in the country for 35 years since the age of five, is currently a Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University, where he is studying infectious diseases. Will had traveled to South Korea to attend his brother's wedding and was returning to the United States when he was stopped and detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the airport.

Despite being a legal permanent resident, he was held for more than eight days in an administrative office space in a secondary inspection area. He slept in a chair under bright lights that remained on 24 hours a day and was provided only concession stand food. During this time, he was denied access to his attorney without a clear explanation for his detention.

For the first week of his detention, both Will's family and legal representatives were kept in the dark regarding the justification for his continued confinement. After more than a week at San Francisco Airport, Will was transferred into the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). He was first moved to a facility in Florence, Arizona, then later to the El Valle Detention Center in Raymondville, Texas, near the U.S.–Mexico border.

NAKASEC continues to monitor the case closely and is coordinating with legal counsel to challenge the legality of his detention and to ensure that his rights as a permanent resident are upheld. Below is a summary of NAKASEC's actions.

1. Political Advocacy

- **Phone Banking:** Efforts have been initiated to engage federal representatives from Texas, specifically both U.S. Senators and Representative Michael McCaul (College Station, TX), urging them to intervene and advocate for Will's immediate release.

2. Community Mobilization

- **Petitions:** Over 1,100 individuals have signed a petition calling for Will's release.
- **Support Letters:** Letters are being collected from various organizations.
- **Texas A&M University Engagement:** Despite initial reluctance from the administration to publicly support Will, efforts continue to mobilize faculty and student groups. Outreach is ongoing to encourage institutional backing from the university community, given Will's prominent role as a scholar and infectious disease researcher.

This case presents a troubling example of due process violations, the questionable application of immigration law, and the mistreatment of non-citizens who have long contributed to American society.

It underscores the urgent need for a systematic review of how federal immigration agencies handle returning legal residents—particularly in cases involving decades-old, low-level offenses that had previously been resolved and did not affect legal status.

Speaker: Daniel Chung, President, Korean American Bar Association of Northern California (KABANC)

Daniel Chung is actively coordinating with various Korean Bar Associations nationwide. The goal is to build a unified vocal front not only among Korean Bar Associations but also across broader Asian American Bar Associations throughout the U.S.

Chung emphasizes the need for immediate action to maintain public and media attention. He anticipates a forthcoming statement from the Korean Bar Association of New York regarding Mr. Kim's situation. There was another recent incident in New York involving a 20-year-old university student—allegedly detained and transferred for expedited removal despite holding a valid visa—which underscores the urgency of the situation.

With similar cases emerging nationwide, Chung warns that attention may quickly shift from one case to another, risking a loss of momentum. A former ICE Assistant Chief Counsel informed him that the detained individual could be held indefinitely, with slim chances of release without aggressive legal and public advocacy. Chung calls for:

- Swift and coordinated action from legal and advocacy communities.
- Public pressure and consistent media engagement.
- Mobilization of both ethnic and national legal associations to respond collectively.

The situation demands a unified legal and advocacy response to ensure justice and prevent further rights violations. Time-sensitive action is critical to sustaining visibility and impact.

7. Q&A and Discussions

8. Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, September 8, 2025, starting 1:55 pm ET/10:55 am PT