

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
Subcommittee on Language Access
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95814

February 1, 2021

RE: Recommendations to expand community outreach and education

Dear Commissioners Akutagawa and Fernandez –

On behalf of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), I write to commend your commitment to integrate language access into the 2020 California Citizens’ Redistricting Commission’s overall Strategic Outreach Plan in order to reach and inform all Californians about the importance and process of redistricting, as well as provide recommendations to expand your reach to smaller Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, including Fijian, Hmong, Samoan and Tongan communities to name a few.

CAPIAA elevates the political, economic, and social issues of Asians American and Pacific Islander communities by contributing to and strengthening how state government addresses the needs, issues, and concerns of the diverse and complex AA&PI communities. AA&PI communities consists of over 50 different ethnic communities and over 100 different spoken languages. One-third of the AA&PI population in the United States (US) reside in California - where 6,762,404 Asian Americans and over 340,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders¹ (NHPI) call California home.

As the Asian American population is the fastest growing population in California, and NHPI being the second fastest growing population, it is critical that California, including the 2020 California Citizens’ Redistricting Commission, expands language access to engage communities that have been historically left out of conversations. We recommend the following languages to expand the Commission’s overall outreach and engagement strategies in order to reach and ignite activation from all communities –

- Expand translated materials to include Redistricting 101 (what is it, why it’s important), how to engage and provide feedback throughout the process, and training materials into the 12 languages listed in the “Language Access Recommendation” document.
- Expand the 2020 California Citizens’ Redistricting Commission’s contract for translation and interpretation services to include Fijian, Hmong, Samoan, and Tongan.
- Consider the most appropriate medium of translation and interpretation for various languages. For example, it may be more effective to reach the Hmong community with audio/video content instead of written materials due to the community’s history with oral and written systems.

¹ US Census

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN AFFAIRS

- If the commission must work with community-based organizations to provide translation and interpretation services, please provide the appropriate funds and resources for CBOs to provide language access AND carry out the outreach to their constituents.
- Expand contracts to include effective ethnic-media outlets in order to reach the previously mentioned population.

We thank the 2020 California Citizens' Redistricting Commission and the subcommittee for your work to roll out an effective outreach and engagement redistricting plan. We hope that you find these recommendations helpful to expand California's reach to all of our communities, especially those who have been historically disenfranchised due to the lack of language access. I am happy to answer any questions or further support your subcommittee to strengthen your language access outreach efforts to the Asian American and NHPI communities throughout California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nkauj Iab Yang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nkauj Iab Yang
Executive Director