



**President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
Fourth Quarterly Meeting and AAPI Town Hall
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 13, 2021**

The President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (PAC-AAPI or "the Commission") convened its fourth meeting at 4:00 p.m. (EDT) on January 13, 2021 via video conferencing.

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 4:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. (EDT) via audio and video conference technology.

A roll call of Commission members preceded the meeting.

PAC-AAPI Members Present:

- Paul S. Hsu of Florida, Chair of the Commission
- Doris Flores Brooks of Guam
- Eddie Calvo of Guam
- Jennifer Carnahan of Minnesota
- Grace Y. Lee of Michigan
- George Leing of Florida
- Jan-Ie Low of Nevada
- Herman Martir of Texas
- Keiko Matsudo Orrall of Massachusetts
- Prem Parameswaran of New York
- Amata Coleman Radewagen of American Samoa
- Michelle P. Steel of California
- Chilling Tong of Maryland
- Helen Van Etten of Kansas

I. Welcome Remarks from the Chair of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross

Secretary Wilbur Ross opened by acknowledging the challenges that AAPIs have faced during 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that there are nearly 2 million AAPI-owned

enterprises in the United States, many of which are sole proprietorships. Secretary Ross emphasized that these businesses are the backbone of the U.S. economy and provide the livelihoods of countless families. He noted that these businesses are especially vulnerable amid unrest and uncertainty and that they were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic downturn. Secretary Ross commended the Commissioners for their quick response in creating reports to reflect the struggles of AAPI communities impacted by the pandemic and for providing clear guidance on implementable measures to reduce disparities.

Secretary Ross indicated that these reports and recommendations culminated in the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report, which provides concrete, attainable recommendations aimed at increasing the understanding of the AAPI experience and providing AAPIs with ready access to key economic resources. Secretary Ross commended the Commissioners for their broad and successful efforts to assist AAPIs through seminars, town halls, and conference calls. He also encouraged them to participate in interagency work to leverage the federal government to elevate the concerns and meet the needs of the AAPI community. He noted that, by 2060, the AAPI community will reach 40 million members (outnumbering the current most populous U.S. state) and yet AAPIs do not receive the same resources or amount of attention as do other minority populations.

Secretary Ross concluded by encouraging the Commissioners to continue investing in the AAPI community.

II. Special Remarks from Former Co-Chair of WHIAAPI and former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao

Secretary Chao commended the Commissioners for their work helping mainstream America understand the vital role and contributions of AAPIs, and encouraged the Commissioners to continue their work to empower AAPIs with opportunities and improve the welfare of AAPIs. She noted that the AAPI community constitutes 6.7 percent of the U.S. population. She explained that mainstream American culture benefits from immigrants who share their native culture, history, and philosophy. Secretary Chao emphasized that in the current global economy individuals benefit from understanding more than one language, culture, and set of customs. The learning role of immigrants and children of immigrants has expanded to a teaching role, with AAPIs poised to act as ambassadors and bridges of understanding.

Secretary Chao shared that her own experiences as an Asian American and as an American have always been complementary in understanding and bridging the gap between the East and West. She concluded by expressing her gratitude for the opportunity to work with Secretary Wilbur Ross, observing that the Secretaries' diverse strengths have contributed well to the leadership of WHIAPPI.

III. Call to Order

Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Paul Hsu, called the meeting to order, and thanked the Secretaries and Commissioners in attendance for their efforts.

A. Special Recognition

The Chairman invited Commissioner Chiling Tong to make a special presentation.

Commissioner Tong presented Secretaries Chao and Ross with an award for their service as co-chairs of WHIAAPI and for their work for the AAPI community at large.

Chairman Hsu invited Commissioner Grace Lee to deliver a special presentation. Commissioner Lee presented WHIAAPI Executive Director Tina Wei Smith with an award for her service to WHIAAPI and for her work on behalf of the broader AAPI community.

B. Remarks from Chair of the Commission, Dr. Paul Hsu

Chairman Hsu acknowledged the hard work of the Commissioners and WHIAAPI staff for their efforts and assistance in making PAC-AAPI successful. He noted that the Commission had a successful year in 2020, despite setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic. He lauded the Commission's success in completing the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report and presenting the report to the public. He also thanked the Rose Li & Associates team for its help in pulling together the Commissioners' ideas and recommendations and producing the Report in a very short time.

Chairman Hsu encouraged the Commissioners to uphold their commitment to serve the Commission through September 2021, referencing opportunities highlighted by the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report to advance empowerment of AAPIs.

C. Consideration of Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the October 8, 2020 PAC-AAPI meeting were considered. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes.

IV. PAC-AAPI 2020 Report

WHIAAPI Executive Director Smith invited the Commissioners to present on the four areas of focused recommendations from the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report: better data on the AAPI experience, expand AAPI workforce development opportunities, enhance access to economic resources and opportunities for AAPI-owned enterprises, and improve the economic condition of U.S. Pacific Islanders.

A. Report Better Data on the AAPI Experience

Commissioner George Leing noted that the AAPI community is diverse, representing multiple areas and cultures. However, many national surveys group AAPI individuals together under the "Asian" or "Other" general categories. Although some exceptions to this norm exist, more work is needed to capture better data on the diverse AAPI population and their varied needs. Commissioner Leing noted that, to accomplish this, surveys need to be administered in different languages and should oversample the AAPI population.

Commissioner Leing shared the following PAC-AAPI recommendations in this focus area:

1. Address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the AAPI community.
2. Commit to meaningfully measure the experience of the AAPI population in national surveys and to identify the underserved.

B. Expand AAPI Workforce Development Opportunities

Commissioner Keiko Orrall noted that AAPIs are often excluded from diversity initiatives aimed at improving equity for other minority groups, despite data showing that income inequality is fastest growing among Asian Americans. This problem is worsened by stereotypes that AAPIs are a “model minority” and are generally of higher socioeconomic status than other minorities. Commissioner Orrall added that disparities are exacerbated by the tendency of AAPI individuals to forego involvement in public or civic advocacy, and that the ongoing pandemic continues to disproportionately impact AAPIs, particularly essential workers.

Commissioner Orrall shared the following PAC-AAPI recommendations in this focus area:

1. Implement pipeline-building programs that identify and cultivate AAPI leaders.
2. Incentivize AAPIs to pursue new skills for the digital/virtual economy that enhance their ability to serve the broader U.S. community.
3. Ensure equal opportunities for AAPIs to pursue their dreams through higher education.
4. Increase AAPI representation in federal service, particularly in senior management, as well as in federal internships and in federal pipeline and mentorship programs.
5. Include AAPIs in diversity initiatives, particularly in workforce development programs and initiatives for entrepreneurs and businesses.
6. Encourage top 500 U.S. companies to embrace AAPI advancement as a corporate responsibility or priority.
7. Establish innovative mentorship programs for AAPI entrepreneurs and professionals.
8. Continue to recognize and celebrate the many positive contributions of AAPIs.
9. Recognize the extraordinary challenges currently being faced by AAPI health care workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including from anti-AAPI biases and hate crimes.

C. Enhance Access to Economic Resources and Opportunities for AAPI-Owned Enterprises

Commissioner Jan-Ie Low explained that AAPIs are often either unaware or skeptical of available federal resources. Moreover, first generation AAPIs face various cultural and linguistic barriers to receiving assistance. Commissioner Low noted that as of 2018, AAPI-owned firms constituted a disproportionate share of American small businesses, and outperformed non-minority owned businesses in their growth. However, AAPIs are underemployed and underpromoted, indicating that the AAPI population harbors great untapped potential.

Commissioner Low shared the PAC-AAPI recommendations to

1. Improve AAPI access to federal resources, opportunities, and business tools.
2. Deliver additional small business relief measures to economic sectors that have been and continue to be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and in which AAPIs are overrepresented, such as the hospitality and service industries.
3. Overcome AAPI barriers to accessing Federal government procurement opportunities.
4. Collaborate with and recognize private organizations that provide assistance to AAPI businesses.

D. Improve the Economic Condition of U.S. Pacific Islanders

WHIAAPI Executive Director Smith shared the following PAC-AAPI recommendations in this focus area:

1. Increase economic outreach to and investment in U.S. Pacific Island territories.
2. Ensure the economic sufficiency and security of U.S. Pacific territories and their peoples.
3. Ease assimilation of U.S. Pacific Islanders into the mainland U.S. economy.

V. New Business

Chairman Hsu reminded Commissioners that they are required to complete 2021 ethics training. Additional information including the completion due date will be emailed to Commissioners.

WHIAAPI Executive Director Smith noted that one of the main PAC-AAPI commitments for 2021 is to conduct the Survey of AAPI Small Business Owners. This survey will gather data on AAPI- small business owners and the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and communities. A 60-day period for public comment regarding this proposed information collection has been posted in the Federal Register with comments due on or before February 26, 2021. At the end of the public comment period, PAC-AAPI will work with the MBDA to ensure that the Survey completes the Office of Management and Budget clearance process. Executive Director Smith explained that if all goes as planned, the survey will be fielded beginning around April 1, and results should be available before the end of April, in time for AAPI Heritage Month in May.

VI. Approval of the Fifth Quarterly Meeting

Chairman Hsu confirmed that the fifth quarterly PAC-AAPI meeting will be planned as an in-person meeting in April 2021. The date and location of the meeting will be determined later and distributed via email.

VII. Special Guest Speaker, Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero of Guam

Commissioner Eddie Calvo introduced Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero of Guam; the first woman elected governor of Guam. Governor Guerrero commended the Commissioners for their efforts to empower AAPIs by improving their quality of life, raising their standards of living, and increasing their participation in the economy. She noted that COVID-19 has highlighted longstanding health inequities, particularly among Pacific Islanders, who are at heightened risk for severe infection because of their high prevalence of underlying health conditions, exacerbated by poor social determinants of health. Governor Guerrero stressed the need to remove the barriers that prevent Pacific Islanders from obtaining higher education and subsequently improving their health, advancing their careers, and facilitating their economic prosperity.

Governor Guerrero acknowledged the disparity between U.S. territories and mainland citizens regarding access to quality education and healthcare. Constitutional rights are limited for those living in U.S. territories, even if, like Puerto Ricans, they are U.S. citizens (e.g., in terms of rights to receive Social Security and Medicare or Medicaid benefits). Governor Guerrero emphasized that the lack of investment in the territories' healthcare is also reflected in the

territories' unemployment rates and infrastructure issues.

Governor Guerrero asserted that U.S. territories are not appropriately considered in federal policy, including policies aimed at addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked the Commissioners to continue to focus on Pacific Islanders' needs as part of their work for PAC-AAPI, particularly by addressing inequities between U.S. territories and the mainland.

VIII. AAPI Town Hall

Commissioner Herman Martir opened the AAPI Town Hall by inviting Commissioner Amata Radewagen to provide welcome remarks.

Commissioner Radewagen thanked her fellow Commissioners, Executive Director Smith, and the Director of the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA), Nikolao Pula, for their work empowering AAPIs. She also commended the Commissioners for their work developing the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report. She noted that, although American Samoa remains free of COVID-19 cases, the lack of commercial travel threatens the fragile island economies of American Samoa and other U.S. territories that depend on tourism.

Commissioner Radewagen expressed her hope that the opening of the world economies and the rollout of 5G internet access will advance education and economic growth within the U.S. territories, opening access to higher paying jobs. She concluded by encouraging Commissioners to continue their work to address the inequalities faced by the AAPI community.

Briefings

Minority Business Development Agency

David Byrd, National Director of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) within the U.S. Department of Commerce, noted that during fiscal year (FY) 2020, MBDA helped minority-owned businesses obtain \$6.9 billion in contracts, 70 percent of which were awarded by private sector organizations. These contracts represent a 122 percent growth from those awarded to minority-owned small businesses during FY2019. Director Byrd emphasized that MBDA represents 11 million minority-owned businesses, which together account for approximately \$1.8 trillion of the U.S. economy. However, MBDA was only allotted \$25 million during the latest COVID-19 stimulus package to assist these businesses, with direction to allocate these funds to MBDA Business Centers. Director Byrd expressed a desire to provide more relief funds to minority-owned businesses, and he expressed concern that an estimated 40 percent of minority-owned businesses may not reopen. He concluded by highlighting MBDA programs that invest in minority-owned businesses.

Employment & Training Administration

Amy Simon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Employment & Training Administration within the U.S. Department of Labor, presented on unemployment insurance programs. She explained that regular unemployment insurance is structured as a federal-state partnership. These programs are typically funded by state taxes on employers, and benefits are available to workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. To supplement these programs in light of COVID-19, the U.S. government created the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program, the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, and the Federal Pandemic

Unemployment Compensation program. These programs are expected to continue through mid-March 2021. Unlike regular unemployment insurance, these programs implemented in response to the pandemic are available in all U.S. territories. Deputy Assistant Secretary Simon concluded by encouraging anyone with questions about unemployment insurance to contact their respective state agencies.

Office of Veterans Business Development

Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator for the Office of Veterans Business Development within the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), presented on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Federal legislation signed in December 2020 increased funding for the PPP program and set aside funds for new and smaller borrowers, borrowers in low- and moderate-income communities, and community and smaller lenders. On Monday, January 11, SBA began accepting First Draw PPP loan applications from participating community financial institutions with under \$1 billion in assets and for borrowers who have not received a PPP loan before August 8, 2020. SBA began accepting Second Draw PPP loan applications on Wednesday, January 13 for eligible borrowers with a maximum of 10 employees or for loans of \$250,000 or less for eligible borrowers in low- or moderate-income neighborhoods. SBA is working to increase access to PPP loans for minority-, veteran-, and women-owned businesses by encouraging community financial institutions and other small lenders to join the PPP lending community and promoting awareness of PPP policies and procedures to minority-owned firms. PPP loans are forgivable if at least 60 percent is spent on payroll expenses. Small businesses interested in the program can use the lender match tool available on the SBA website to locate participating financial institutions in their area. COVID-19 guidance and resources are available on the SBA website in 15 languages to assist small-business owners.

Office of Insular Affairs

Nikolao Pula, Director of the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) within the U.S. Department of the Interior, explained that the OIA works toward fulfilling the mission of Executive Order 13872 to empower AAPIs to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in the U.S. economy. Director Pula commended the U.S. Census Bureau for its efforts to include the U.S. territories in the 2020 Census; it opened offices in each territory to perform the Census locally and collaborated with OIA to connect with the Native Hawaiian population. OIA plans to carefully review the recommendations set forth in the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report and looks forward to supporting WHIAAPI through September 2021.

WHIAAPI Regional Network

Ben Raju, Los Angeles District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration, and Paul Chang, from the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor, spoke on behalf of the Southern California WHIAAPI Regional Network. They explained that the WHIAAPI Regional Network offices serve as resources for AAPI individuals seeking information or assistance from the federal government. They noted that the WHIAAPI Regional Network is composed of a career staff of over 300 members (covering all 10 federal regions), each lead by a chair or by two co-chairs. WHIAAPI Regional Networks serve to ensure access and coverage of information about federal programs to AAPIs, as well as to assist AAPIs with community-level concerns. They concluded by emphasizing that, regardless of changes in presidential administration or assistance bills, the Regional Networks is available to empower AAPIs.

IX. Public Comment Period

- Jorge Perez presented two questions for the Commissioners to consider: 1) whether any AAPI initiative exists to study the historical genetic roots of the nations that originate in Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Pacific Islands, and North and South America; and 2) whether the Department of Commerce was planning to create opportunities for manufacturing endeavors in Hawaii, Guam, or other Pacific Islands to welcome U.S. companies that are considering leaving operations in Hong Kong and China.
 - Commissioner Calvo observed that the current situation in Hong Kong presents opportunities for the American territories and the state of Hawaii; as example, the American Chamber of Commerce located in Hong Kong has entertained moving operations to Guam, the closest American territory. Policy makers and the new Administration are set to be able to leverage these opportunities.
- Peter Lee Hamilton thanked the Commissioners for their work, adding that their support of the AAPI community is a source of inspiration. He commended the recommendation in the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report that seeks to build a pipeline for younger AAPIs to become involved in government and business. He asked the Commissioners whether the change in Administration would affect the future of the Report and the recommendations therein.
 - Mr. Raju noted that the PAC-AAPI 2020 Report formalized a roadmap for policy makers and government officials to empower AAPIs. The Commissioners serve through September 2021, allowing for a smooth hand-off of the material to the new Administration. He added that the AAPI Regional Network has been around since the inception of WHIAAPI and emphasized that officials serving as part of the Network will ensure that AAPI concerns are heard and that there is a continuity of resources and assistance.

WHIAAPI Executive Director Smith closed the public comment period and turned the meeting over to Chairman Hsu for concluding remarks. Chairman Hsu thanked those who were in attendance and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Commission.

With no further public comments, the public comment period was closed.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm (EDT).

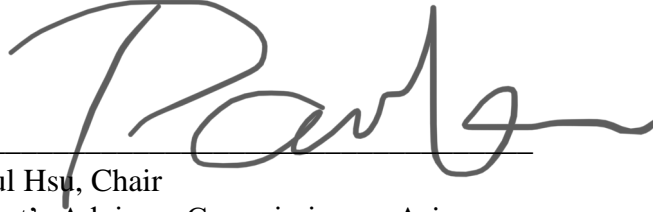
XI. Materials Provided to the Commission Members

The following materials were provided to the Commissioners during the meeting:

- Agenda
- Discussion Slides
- October Quarterly Meeting Minutes
- PAC-AAPI 2020 Report

XII. Certification

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.¹



1/21/21

Dr. Paul Hsu, Chair
President's Advisory Commission on Asian
Americans and Pacific Islanders
Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce

Date

Tina Wei Smith, Designated Federal Official
White House Initiative on Asian Americans and
Pacific Islanders
Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce

Date

¹ These minutes will be approved formally by PAC-AAPI at its next meeting planned for April 2021, and corrections or notations will be stated in the minutes of that meeting.