



**President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders  
Third Quarterly Meeting – Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, October 15, 2020**

The President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ("the Commission") convened its third meeting at 4:00 p.m. (EDT) on October 15, 2020, 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 6:00 p.m. (EDT) via audio and video conference technology.

**PAC-AAPI Members Present Online:**

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

**I. Welcome & Call to Order**

Dr. Paul Hsu, Chairman of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in the public attending by videoconferencing.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken.

### **III. Approval of Minutes from August 5, 2020 Meeting**

Commissioners unanimously accepted the minutes from the second quarterly meeting.

### **IV. Recognition of Filipino American History Month**

PAC-AAPI set aside the first part of their meeting to recognize and celebrate Filipino American History Month. WHIAAPI co-hosted this segment with notable guest speakers, Co-Chairs of WHIAAPI, Secretary Elaine L. Chao, and Secretary Wilbur Ross. To kick off the celebration were remarks from Commissioner Herman Martir.

#### **Commissioner Herman Martir of Texas**

Commissioner Herman Martir began by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this virtual event celebrating Filipino American History Month. The Commissioner shared that over 4 million Filipino Americans reside in the United States. The Commissioner also shared that Filipinos were among the first settlers on the North American continent in 1587 before the arrival of Pilgrims, settling in present-day Morro Bay, California. The Commissioner emphasized the impact of Filipino Americans on the U.S. economy and health industry since the late 1960s and acknowledged the many Filipino American healthcare workers who are at the frontlines of battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao, Co-Chair of WHIAAPI**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao began by extending gratitude to the Commissioners for coming together for their third open meeting. Secretary Chao recognized the Filipino Americans who joined the call to celebrate Filipino American History Month.

Secretary Chao acknowledged the goal of the Commission, which is to positively impact the lives of the fastest-growing minority population in America as well as the 1.9 million AAPI-owned enterprises. The Secretary also shared that the federal government has been working hard to help address the impact of COVID-19, most notably with the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act signed on March 27, 2020. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Treasury Department have been hard at work processing years of application backlogs to help small businesses. She noted that this is especially important to the AAPI community, which includes so many entrepreneurs and small business owners.

The Department of Transportation's priority during this emergency has been to keep our nation's critical transportation systems and supply chains open, operational, and safe. The Department of Transportation has distributed \$10 billion to our nation's airports, \$25 billion to transit authorities, and \$1 billion to Amtrak, our passenger rail system. In addition, the Department of Transportation supported the Treasury's program of nearly \$50 billion in assistance to the airlines, travel agents, and contractors in the aviation sector. All this assistance was to meet payroll, maintain operations as well as purchase cleaning equipment and supplies. The Department has also provided 100 million face coverings to the transportation sector. Lastly, the

Department has provided regulatory relief to every transportation sector when needed. These measures are vital to keeping our supply chains open, operational, and safe.

Secretary Chao concluded by extending gratitude for the work that others are doing to identify barriers to the advancement of the AAPI community within mainstream America and the important development of solutions.

### **U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Co-Chair of WHIAAPI**

Secretary Ross extended special thanks to Secretary Elaine L. Chao for her guidance and leadership of the White House Initiative on AAPIs. Secretary Ross shared that this important Initiative seeks to positively impact the lives of the fastest-growing minority population in America, as well as the 1.9 million enterprises large and small. Secretary Ross also extended thanks to the Commissioners who joined the open meeting. Secretary Ross commended the Commissioners for their continued service as we advance through the economic relief period.

Secretary Ross welcomed those joining the call from the Filipino American community. He noted the gratitude towards the hundreds of thousands of Filipino Americans working in the medical field to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that two weeks ago, it was reported that 661,000 workers returned to work last month across multiple sectors, with the highest gains in the hospitality, retail, professional and business services, transportation, and warehousing industries. Also noted in total, 11.4 million Americans have gone back to work over the last five months.

He also noted that the Administration is continuing to deploy resources that address the impacts of COVID-19 on minority businesses. Under the President's CARES Act, the Paycheck Protection Program provided more than \$525 billion to more than 5 million companies with fewer than 500 employees. The Administration continues to work with Congress on the quick passage of another stimulus bill. Also adding that he is hopeful that additional relief will be provided soon. He shared that the U.S. Government is putting its resources behind rebuilding the U.S. economy and working to strengthen our global commercial ties, adding that community exporters will benefit significantly from the newly entered U.S. Mexico Canada Agreement. The agreement will generate even more economic growth while the pandemic subsides. Specifically, the new rules of origin will help re-shore production and re-establish domestic supply chains in many industrial sectors, which will level the playing field for companies to do business with Mexico and Canada.

Secretary Ross added that since USMCA went into effect in July, the U.S. Government has been busy implementing this ground-breaking trade deal:

- Published rules for dispute settlements
- Issued new tariff schedules and duty rates
- Released guidelines to administer the high-wage component of the labor-content requirements
- And put in place labor enforcement provisions that are written into the agreement.

He reassured that the Administration would continue to engage closely with Mexico and Canada to fortify the world's largest trading block under this agreement. President Trump has also made U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific region a top priority of this Administration. Indo-Pacific nations account for two-thirds of all global trade.

Secretary Ross also noted that in 2019, the United States conducted \$1.89 trillion in two-way trade with Indo-Pacific nations. He also reported that the U.S.-source FDI in the Indo-Pacific region at the end of last year was valued at \$955.4 billion, which increased by 7.6 percent from 2018. The stock of Indo-Pacific-source FDI in the United States was valued at over \$969 billion. FDI from the United States to the Philippines was led by the manufacturing, wholesale trade, and professional, scientific, and technical services sectors, and totaled \$7.1 billion in 2017 (latest available), up 12.5 percent from 2016. Philippine-source FDI in the United States was \$750 million the same year, up 1.4 percent over 2016.

Since the President's launch of the Indo-Pacific Strategy in July 2018, the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration (ITA) has facilitated commercial partnerships for more than 11,000 U.S. companies to doing business in the region. ITA's work resulted in \$62.3 billion in U.S. export volume and \$21.3 billion in inward foreign investment, as well as support for more than 354,000 American jobs.

The Commerce Department plays a leading role in strengthening our commercial ties in the Indo-Pacific region by working on behalf of U.S. companies to:

- Identify project procurement opportunities
- Find reliable partners for outward exports and inward investment
- Secure access to financing
- Reduce market access barriers
- And look for good business climate conditions across Asia.

Secretary Ross noted that one example of such endeavors is the Asia EDGE Initiative, an interagency effort designed to grow sustainable and secure energy markets throughout the Indo-Pacific. Starting in June, the Department began hosting a series of Asia EDGE online workshops, collaborating with eight other U.S. Government agencies to highlight federal resources for American energy companies working in the Indo-Pacific region; these workshops will run through the end of 2020.

ITA organized the Asia EDGE Market Development Forum on Energy Digitalization in Southeast Asia on October 6. This multi-day online program's goal was to enable increased U.S. exports of energy resilience, cybersecurity, and digitalization technologies and services to Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Secretary Ross concluded with a recap on the 2019 Indo-Pacific Business Forum, sharing that countries' agreements have resulted in billions of dollars in U.S. exports. He noted that the Department of Commerce would continue to make resources like these – that encourage expanding trade and investment, drive American innovation, and spur economic and job growth

– available to businesses. Ensuring a healthy business climate where companies can compete and thrive will continue to help the U.S. progress through economic recovery.

Secretary Wilbur Ross encouraged members of the Commission to continue to craft their report to the President with recommendations that will continue to advance AAPIs.

### **Vic Mercado, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities at the U.S. Department of Defense**

Assistant Secretary Mercado began by extending thanks to Secretary Chao, Secretary Ross, Chairman Martir, and the Commissioners for their leadership in supporting events that recognize and honor rich Asian American and Pacific Islander culture. He then discussed Filipinos' history in the United States, noting that it dates back to October 1587. He shared about an American cemetery in Manila that holds the largest number of military dead from World War II totaling over 17,000, with a memorial wall that includes the names of over 36,000 missing in action.

Assistant Secretary Mercado reflected on his childhood and his time at the U.S. Naval Academy, drawing on the importance of the U.S. and the Philippines' relationship. He concluded by noting that there were only a handful of Filipino Americans during his time in the Naval Academy. Today, in the Brigade of Midshipmen, there are 99 Filipino American midshipmen. The entire membership of the club numbers 300. It is encouraging to see more AAPIs in the U.S. military and throughout the federal government.

### **Kelly Ilagan, Senior Advisor, International Trade Administration (ITA), U.S. Department of Commerce**

Kelly Ilagan began by thanking U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao, the White House, WHIAAPI Executive Director Tina Wei Smith, and the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak. She also shared her excitement about joining the Trump Administration's fourth annual Filipino American History Month celebration.

Ilagan acknowledged Filipino Americans' representation on the call and reflected on her childhood going to Filipino School at the PACCM after church on Sundays. She would spend hours grocery shopping at the Filipinas Oriental Food store and compare all of the lechon's at each new Filipino restaurant that would open. She noted that this allowed her to see the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of Filipinos.

Kelly Ilagan shared that growing up; her parents taught her that if you work hard, you can make something of yourself, no matter where you came from. They taught her never to expect anything to be given to her, especially from the government. The United States is once again internationally competitive, retaining and creating jobs and leading worldwide in high-tech innovation. The Administration has tackled the corporate tax rate, aggressively deregulated for businesses to thrive faster than ever, and committed to workforce development initiatives through the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board (chaired by Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and Advisor to the President, Ivanka Trump).

She also shared that the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Service in the Global Markets office of the International Trade Administration helps the global business environment by working for American industry through their offices in over 100 U.S. cities and 75 markets around the world, through a four-pillared approach:

- Providing trade and export promotion services for U.S. companies
- Lead on commercial diplomacy to address and remove barriers to trade
- Advocating for U.S. companies bidding on foreign government tenders
- and attracting inbound and the retention of domestic investment in the United States through the SelectUSA program.

Kelly Ilagan concluded by sharing that over the last three years, the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service has assisted more than 77,000 U.S. exporters (where more than 90% of businesses were SMEs), facilitated \$296 billion in U.S. exports and inward foreign direct investment, supported 1.3 million American jobs, and returned more than \$300 to the U.S. economy for every \$1 appropriated to it.

Senior Advisor Ilagan ended by encouraging small business owners, employees of companies in the U.S., and consumers of American-made products that there is support from the Trump Administration.

### **Ninio Fetalvo, Communications Advisor at The White House**

Ninio Fetalvo thanked Secretary Chao, Secretary Ross, the Commissioners, and others for joining the event to celebrate Filipino American History Month as he began his presentation.

Fetalvo shared and reflected on his parents' journey as immigrants coming to the United States for a better life for themselves and their children.

He acknowledged the many Filipino Americans working on the frontlines in the medical and health field to combat the Coronavirus pandemic. He then provided updates from the Administration on their work to fight the Coronavirus.

President Trump created OPERATION WARP SPEED (OWS), which is harnessing the full power and resources of the federal government, private sector, military, and scientific community in an unprecedented, ground-breaking effort to accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in record time. The Administration has multiple vaccine candidates simultaneously going through clinical trials, regulatory approval, and mass production. The nation is on track to have 100 million doses of an approved vaccine candidate distributed by the end of 2020 and will begin within 24 hours of the gold standard of FDA approval. The vaccine will be prioritized for the most vulnerable, including frontline healthcare workers. Fetalvo also shared that a vaccine will help prevent the spread of the virus and help our country reopen our small businesses, churches, and schools.

Ninio Fetalvo added that until there is a vaccine, OWS has invested billions of dollars into therapeutics that have treated COVID-19 patients, including our President. He encouraged those

who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate plasma, sharing that it has the potential to help approximately three coronavirus patients battle the virus.

As Communications Advisor Fetalvo concluded, he stated while we have the tools we need to treat those suffering from the virus, and until we get a vaccine, we must remain vigilant as a community to slow the spread and protect ourselves and our loved ones.

1. First, get your FLU SHOT. It is never too early and will be critical as we head into flu season.
2. Practice the 3 Ws:
  - a. Wash your hands
  - b. Watch your distance
  - c. Wear a face covering when you cannot be socially distant

### **Brendan Flores, National Chairman of National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)**

NaFFAA Chairman Brendan Flores expressed appreciation for Secretary Ross, Secretary Chao, and Tina Smith of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, the White House for hosting the event, and Alex Flemister of the White House Office of Public Liaison.

National Chairman Flores shared that NaFFAA serves as the Filipino American community's voice nationwide; noted that Filipinos and Filipinas living in the United States constitute the largest group of Filipinos outside of the Philippines as the third-largest group of Asian-Americans.

He discussed the history of Filipinos in the United States and the ways of service to the country. He also noted that Filipinos proudly serve in every military branch, in law enforcement, in the post office, government agencies like Commerce or Health and Human Services, and elected positions as civil servants at the local and national levels.

Brendan Flores acknowledged Filipino Americans in the medical field, sharing that Filipinas comprise 4% of the nurses in America. According to the National Nurses United Union, almost one-third of nurses' casualties from COVID-19 were Filipina or Filipino.

### **Executive Director Tina Wei Smith, WHIAAPI**

WHIAAPI Executive Director Smith thanked all the special speakers and guests – Secretary Ross, Secretary Chao, Chairman Paul Hsu, Assistant Secretary Mercado, Kelly Ilagan, Ninio Fetalvo, and Brendan Flores – as well as Alex Flemister from White House Office of Public Liaison for co-hosting this Filipino American History Month virtual event.

Executive Director Smith also echoed the sentiments, from Secretary Ross and Secretary Chao and others, that we need to honor the Filipino Americans on the front lines of battling COVID-19 – many as healthcare workers, who are working so hard to save others selflessly.

Smith provided a recap on The Future of Business Virtual Events Series that WHIAAPI has been hosting to connect the AAPI business community and entrepreneurs with federal business tools, resources and opportunities. The series commenced with special remarks by Secretary Elaine L. Chao. Throughout the month of October, WHIAAPI has collaborated with SBA's Office of Women Business Ownership, Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, and the EXIM Bank. This virtual series will continue with presentations by MBDA, Office of Space Commerce, USPTO and the Department of Labor.

Alex Flemister, Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, concluded the celebration by giving a final thank you to everyone who joined to the virtual celebration.

Associate Director Flemister shared that the Office of Public Liaison is coined "the front door of The White House", stating that their job is to engage directly with the American public. He also expressed his commitment to working with the AAPI community. He also noted that President Trump and his administration is focused on supporting the more than 1.9 million AAPI-owned businesses that contribute over \$700 billion annually to the U.S. economy and employ more than 3.6 million Americans.

## **V. OPENING REMARKS FROM CHAIR OF PAC-AAPI, Dr Paul Hsu**

The meeting transitioned back to the business of Commission. Chairman Hsu acknowledged the purpose, commitment, and achievements of the Commission from this year.

Chairman Hsu challenged Commissioners to resist the temptation of merely gathering facts, raising questions and making arguments for the consideration of AAPIs. He reminded that AAPIs are the fastest growing minority population in this country and that their strategy must achieve a matching momentum. He then challenged the Commissioners to develop a comprehensive and strategic plan that will redefine the roles of AAPIs in the fabric of America.

He shared three steps to move forward. He first discussed that the Commission must clearly identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats experienced by AAPIs. He encouraged the Commissioners to celebrate their cultural foundations as well as their resolve to overcome barriers to their success. He then added that the report should provide a catalogue of demographic, survey or trending data along with a roadmap for further examination of the topics and concerns that need further consideration and, ultimately, their recommendations should lead to viable solutions.

Next, he encouraged all commissioners to answer the question: What do we really want to accomplish? The focus areas of the subcommittees are steering towards answers to design specific solutions that are based on well supported qualitative and quantitative evidence. Chairman Hsu also raised questions on how the recommendations will be amplified across the federal government and across the AAPI communities.

Chairman Hsu concluded his remarks by welcoming the Commissioners to present their subcommittee reports.



## **VI. Subcommittee Reports**

Chairman Hsu thanked the Commissioners for their time and willingness to serve the AAPI communities. The meeting then moved to hearing subcommittee reports from the commissioners. The five areas of focus are Passing the Torch, Breaking the Glass Ceiling, Bridging the Income Gap, AAPI Women in Leadership, and COVID-19 Impact on AAPI Businesses and Communities:

### **Passing the Torch – Commissioner Grace Lee of Michigan**

Commissioner Grace Lee shared a few objectives of this subcommittee which are to develop and foster professional and entrepreneurial skills for the younger generations; strive to pass down the experience and expertise to the next generation of leaders; and educate AAPI youth and prepare them for the workforce.

Commissioner Lee discussed the purpose behind the WHIAAPI webinar series on the Future of Business, which is helping the AAPI community to understand the process, identifying resources and connecting with government contract opportunities. Noting that efforts will continue to be made to help AAPI entrepreneurs learn and navigate the federal government procurement program.

Commissioner Lee discussed partnering with the U.S. Patent and Trademark office (USPTO) their new initiatives:

1. “Expanding Innovation Hub”: a centralized online platform to make the patent process more accessible to diverse inventors. This initiative is focused on inspiring more women, minorities, veterans, and geographically and socioeconomically diverse applicants to join the innovation economy.
2. National Council for Expanding American Innovation (NCEAI): The Council is headed by Secretary Ross and it aims at expanding invention, innovation, and entrepreneurship and guiding USPTO in developing a comprehensive national strategy to build a more diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem.

Commissioner Lee also noted that earlier this month, WHIAAPI had a webinar on doing business with the federal government. During this session, attendees heard from DoT, DoC and SBA on procurement opportunities. Based on 2019 data, just shy of 6% of the contracts was awarded to AAPIs but only 1% went to AAPI women owned businesses – data per DoT’s Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Offices (OSDBUs).

Commissioner Lee also made note of the mentor protégé program of SBA and other opportunities with OSDBUs. These are resources for small businesses to grow and expand their presence in the government procurement program. She encouraged the Commission to promote this program to AAPI businesses.

Commissioner Lee closed by mentioning that the subcommittee has not engaged in conversations on ways to continue to build the pipeline of future federal government employees and leaders

from the AAPI community. She added that the subcommittee will address this portion of the initiative in the future.

### **Breaking the Glass Ceiling – Commissioner Helen Van Etten of Kansas**

Commissioner Helen Van Etten discussed that the subcommittee strives to put a heavy emphasis on leadership and mentorship programs. Commissioner Van Etten mentioned that the subcommittee would like to begin working on a virtual roundtable to bring experts together to discuss this topic. They will work with the AAPI Women in Leadership to brainstorm this event.

Commissioner Van Etten reported that the committee has reviewed some of the more recent research on AAPIs in a variety of sectors – law firms, Silicon Valley/tech industry, etc. – and the challenge that AAPIs are facing getting to the C-Suite. The subcommittee recommends that the Commission reviews what the data shows on AAPIs who work in the federal government. She also noted that over the years we have seen improvement of AAPIs moving from middle management to the SES level (senior executive professionals) but that the numbers are still not reflective of the overall number of AAPIs in the federal government. The recommendation was made to the Commission to look at this specific issue and utilize available data to see where the current challenges are and what recommendations can be made to improve representation.

### **AAPI Women in Leadership – Commissioner Doris Flores Brooks of Guam**

Commissioner Doris Flores Brooks discussed that as Pacific Islander women become more educated, it leads to more women in the workplace, and thus, more women leaders. This requires that educational opportunities for Pacific Islander women to remain a top priority. She noted that the private sector is relatively small in most Pacific Islands, which is what Island governments want, but they need to further diversify their economies.

Commissioner Brooks added that the federal government can assist through USAID to help identify grant opportunities for the Pacific Islands. Currently USAID is providing aide to 12 Pacific Islands. USAID also should further expand its mission by allowing aide to our own U.S. territories of Guam, CNMI and American Samoa – noting that WHIAAPI can help start those conversations. The Commissioner encouraged that WHIAAPI work with the Women’s Global Development & Prosperity Initiative, which is headed by Ivanka Trump and funded by USAID, on supporting educational, economic and leadership development opportunities for women of Guam, CNMI and American Samoa.

### **Bridging the Income Gap – Commissioner Prem Parameswaran of New York**

Commissioner Prem Parameswaran began by sharing statistics on AAPIs:

- Over 22 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States
- Highest per capita income of any ethnic group
- Highest educational attainment of any ethnic group with 49.8 percent with at least a bachelor’s degree as well as the highest SAT scores of any ethnic group

- Over 600,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs and CEOs that span some of our biggest companies including Microsoft, Google, IBM, Mastercard, Albertsons to name a few; achieving success at the highest levels of the U.S. Government including our own Madame Secretary Chao, Deputy Director of OMB Derek Kan, Indian American Ajit Pai, Chairman of the FCC.
- Additionally, the newly appointed Dean of Harvard Business School, Srikant Datar and the current PGA Champion Colin Morikawa are also Asian Americans. Asian Americans are succeeding in all walks of life; it is important for the Commission to support Asian Americans.

Commissioner Parameswaran noted topics from the second open meeting and followed with a discussion of possible solutions the Administration should consider:

Asian Americans come to the U.S. for the American Dream of better education, better work opportunity and better family values, but they face reverse discrimination. For example, some of the most prestigious colleges have been limiting the number of qualified AAPI applicants they are willing to accept by implementing quotas (reverse discrimination). The Commissioner added that U.S. DOJ is currently litigating this issue against Yale University. In the workplace, many large employers do not consider Asian Americans as minorities – denying opportunities to initiatives specified for minorities. He followed this with firsthand experience at a large Wall Street firm.

Commissioner Parameswaran expressed the need to change the narrative, support and reward Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders for their hard work:

- **Fix Education:** Prohibit discrimination in the admissions process to prestigious schools including the Ivy League. He suggested to create a larger quota or no quota at all – do not discriminate; he noted that this is very important in bridging income gap. He added that the subcommittee had a meeting with the Assistant Attorney General of DOJ on this topic and that they will continue to advocate for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders community.
- **Fix the Workplace:** Need to encourage Fortune 500 companies to consider Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as minorities and that they commit to recruiting AAPIs. He discussed that there are specific Wall Street firms that have created new funds to advocate for minorities, but those funds do not consider Asian Americans.
- **Creating better access to both SBA and Government Loans** to fund AAPI small businesses.
- **Strive to give Asian Americans economic incentives** to promote small businesses and individuals.

Possible Actionable Solutions for the Administration to consider:

- 1) No quotas or reverse discrimination for admissions to prestigious universities – or it should be raised considerably.

- 2) All U.S. corporations should have Asian Americans identified as a minority with no reverse quotas. Adding that any funds or hiring for minorities should also consider Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
- 3) Tax incentives for both Small Businesses as well as individuals – effective tax rate should be lowered to 18%. The subcommittee believes that this can help businesses and the economy grow.
- 4) The subcommittee has held a few sessions with SBA and the EXIM Bank to help foster ease of access to opportunity loans for AAPI businesses. The subcommittee will continue to promote these outreach opportunities.
- 5) SALT-State and Local Taxes cap should be lifted – Asian Americans and those in the middle class are affected by this policy change. He added that it also hurts potential new homeowners, which does not reflect the American Dream. Commissioner Parameswaran recommends that this cap should be lifted. He added that while this view is being debated in our subcommittee, the idea is to promote, and not hurt, Asian Americans as well as to bridge the income gap.
- 6) AAPI small businesses should have access to bank debt revolvers up to \$30mm which will help fuel growth in the economy.
- 7) Tax credit for all Americans, including Asian Americans, up to \$30k for dinner, entertainment and events for next two years (this will help economy and many of our Asian American small businesses will feel the positive impact).

Commissioner Parameswaran extended thanks to Chairman Hsu for his time and acknowledged that the Commission will continue to work hard on behalf of the AAPI community.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Small Businesses & Communities – Commissioner Jan-Ie Low of Nevada**

Commissioner Jan-Ie Low began by addressing how the AAPI community is growing as a result of support from the Trump Administration and through support of one another. Commissioner Low acknowledged the company, Hennessey, for their special grant opportunities to minority small businesses and communities. Due to the challenges of COVID-19, many companies have committed funds to invest in minority communities, but they exclude the AAPI community. She said that this is a missed opportunity. Based on to the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) 2016 report on U.S. minority owned firms, the combined gross receipts of all minority firms are 1.4 trillion dollars. Of that \$1.4 trillion, fully half (50%) or \$700 billion dollars in gross receipts have been generated by AAPI owned businesses. She also reported that according to the MBDA report, all minority owned firms have created 7.1 million jobs. Of that 7.1 million number, fully half (again 50%) – or 3.5 million jobs have been created by AAPI firms. AAPI businesses have contributed much to the growth of all communities and in the current COVID-19 environment, many AAPI businesses are struggling; they also need the assistance.

Commissioner Low concluded her report with announcing the launch of a scientific survey commissioned by PAC-AAPI to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on the AAPI business community. They plan to launch this survey, pending PRA approval process by OMB, by early 2021 and then provide a report by March of 2021. This project is in direct response to the Executive Order, which advises the Commission to “compile and analyze research and data related to AAPI populations, subpopulations, and businesses”.

## **VII. New Business**

Commissioner Eddie Calvo of Guam provided congratulatory comments to address Filipino American History Month and thanked the Filipino American community for the contributions they have made to our nation. He then gave a short description of his ancestral familial ties to the Philippines and mentioned that his wife is half Filipina, and consequently his children and grandchildren are of Filipino descent. Commissioner Calvo extended his thanks for the Co-Chairs of WHIAAPI, Secretary Chao and Secretary Ross, for celebrating the achievements of Filipino Americans.

Commissioner Calvo also applauded the Commission for their exemplary work towards completing a report of recommendations to the President. He noted a great deal of focus on issues relating to American Pacific Islanders, both living in the U.S. Mainland, as well as in the Pacific Islands as well.

## **VIII. Public Comment Period**

Don Kiolbassa reported that the pandemic and subsequent shut down has hit Asian small businesses extremely hard. The CARES Act provided the PPP Loans, which were relatively successful. However, smaller businesses lacked the connections or sophistication necessary to complete the paperwork and were left stranded. Many first-generation Asian businesses fall into this category.

Kiolbassa petitioned for the PPP to be extended for a second time, and for businesses asking for loans under a certain threshold be offered an automatically forgiven loan to the extent of salary, utilities, and rent. He also noted that COVID-19 is causing additional issues. The State and Local Tax (SALT) also causes issues as municipalities deal with budget shortfalls. He shared that many cities and villages are threatening increase in property taxes or layoffs to cover budget shortfalls.

Kiolbassa concluded with stating that he would love the chance to discuss bringing back the 1040 Schedule A State and Local Tax deduction for SALT taxes and real estate taxes/mortgages to offset the burden to homeowners of the likely increases in taxes.

Peter Hamilton also provided his appreciation for the Commission and for hosting an informative meeting.

Executive Director Tina Wei Smith closed the public comment period seeing no more public participants had comments. She turned the meeting back to Chairman Paul Hsu for concluding remarks.

**IX. Next Steps and Adjournment**

Chairman Hsu thanked the Commissioners and those joining from the public. He announced that the next meeting of the Commission would likely be in December or January, pending the completion of the report and potential COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m. (EDT)

**X. Materials Provided to the Commission Members**

The following materials were provided to the Commission members at the meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Discussion Slides
3. August Quarterly Meeting Minutes
4. Bios for Speakers

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



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

1/20/21

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

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Date