

PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Vetoes AB 295 (Lieu): Asian & Pacific Islander Americans Express Disappointment

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed AB 295, sponsored by Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality (AACRE) and authored by Assembly Member Ted Lieu. AB 295 would have ensured state health, social services, and employment data is more accurate in representing the diversity within Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) communities. In his veto message, Governor Schwarzenegger described the bill as being “unnecessary.”

“California is home to one-third of the nation’s APIA population - the greatest number in the country - and is expected to double by 2050,” says Karin Wang of Asian Pacific American Legal Center. “AB 295 expresses the desire of APIA community members to be counted in an accurate way. Without disaggregated data that recognizes our diversity, many communities are rendered invisible. We are incredibly disappointed that Governor Schwarzenegger chose not to sign this important priority for our communities.”

Under existing law, California state agencies are required to collect data for 11 APIA ethnic groups. AB 295 would require state agencies governing health, human services, employment and civil rights to expand their data collection for additional APIA ethnic groups, to be consistent with the way in which data is collected and reported by the federal US Census. These groups include Hmong, Tongan, Thai, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Malaysian, Indonesian, Taiwanese, and Fijian communities.

“Formulating effective public policy and programs is impossible without having data specific to different APIA ethnic groups,” states Vincent Pan of Chinese for Affirmative Action. “We are putting communities in harm’s way if we do not collect data for subpopulations. For example, Vietnamese women have much higher rates of cervical cancer than any other ethnic group, but yet have very low cancer screening rates. Without specific data, healthcare providers would not know to target this population for life-saving cancer screening tests.”

“AB 295 galvanized some of the broadest and deepest support we have seen from the community because of our recognition of the diverse cultures, languages, and needs of the APIA population,” says Angela Chan of Asian Law Caucus. “AB 295 (Lieu) is necessary for uncovering these differences and addressing unique community needs.”

AACRE is a joint partnership between Chinese for Affirmative Action, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, and Asian Law Caucus, dedicated to bringing a voice for California’s diverse APIA community to the state’s capital.

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