

June 18, 2014

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
2309 Rayburn HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee
2426 Rayburn HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

As leaders of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community we are writing to request your support in moving the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (VRAA) forward by scheduling a hearing and mark-up as soon as possible.

We are pleased to acknowledge the progress made on January 16, 2014 with the introduction of the VRAA (H.R. 3899/S. 1945), a bipartisan bill that will amend the Voting Rights Act (VRA) to ensure a modern, flexible, and forward-looking set of protections that address the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*. That decision resulted in the suspension of the use of the most effective tool that Americans had against racial discrimination in voting. The November elections are fast approaching, and for the first time in nearly fifty years, there are no adequate voter discrimination protections in place to protect Americans' constitutional right to vote.

Protecting voters from discrimination is a fundamental concern for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, individuals of Asian descent were barred from becoming American citizens. This law was not reversed until 1953, and prior to that our community had no recourse to change such xenophobic policy. This, of course, meant that a vast majority of Asian Americans were effectively barred from voting until the law's reversal. The VRA was the next step in our community's drive to become full and equal citizens by helping to ensure access to the polls through the voting discrimination protections.

Nationwide, our community has grown by forty six percent, making us the most rapidly growing racial group in the U.S. Reactions to this growth can and have resulted in racial tensions and discrimination. Our communities are also growing in areas that have seen both historical and present violations of voting rights. We need tools, like those proposed in the VRAA, to ensure the election process is free from discrimination.

We have made great progress as a nation, but discrimination in voting is not a thing of the past and this bill will create modernized tools to ensure every American, regardless of race, color, ethnic background, or English language proficiency, is able to exercise their right to vote. We need strong, fair laws that protect voters from disenfranchisement.

It is imperative that Congress act without delay. We ask that you schedule a hearing and mark-up to move the process forward.

Sincerely,

APIAVote-Michigan
Asian American Federation of Florida
Asian American Legal Advocacy Center (AALAC)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Asian Law Caucus
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Los Angeles
Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI)
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Chamber of Commerce of Arizona
Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
Asian Pacific Community in Action
Asian Services in Action, Inc.
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
BPSOS-Delaware Valley
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS)
Center for Southeast Asians
Chhaya CDC
Chinese American Citizens Alliance - Phoenix Chapter
Chinese American Citizens Alliance - Phoenix Chapter
Chinese American Citizens Alliance - Tucson Lodge
CT Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Japanese American Citizens League
Japanese American Citizens League, Arizona Chapter
Mile High JAACL
NANAY Community Economic Development Corporation
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
OCA-Greater Los Angeles
OCA-Tucson Chapter
Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, Inc.
Pan Asian Community Alliance
Papa Ola Lokahi
Samoan National Nurses Association
Sampan Newspaper
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
South Asian Helpline & Referral Agency (SAHARA)
South Asian Network
Southwest Center For Asian Pacific American Law
Taulama for Tongans
The Center for APA Women
Union of Pan Asian Communities
VAYLA New Orleans

CC: The Honorable Spencer Bachus (AL-06)
The Honorable Karen Bass (CA-37)
The Honorable Steve Chabot (OH-01)
The Honorable Jason Chaffetz (UT-03)
The Honorable Judy Chu (CA-27)
The Honorable David Cicilline (RI-01)
The Honorable Howard Coble (NC-06)
The Honorable Steve Cohen (TN-09)
The Honorable Doug Collins (GA-09)
The Honorable Suzan DelBene (WA-01)
The Honorable Ron DeSantis (FL-06)
The Honorable Ted Deutch (FL-21)
The Honorable Blake Farenthold (TX-27)
The Honorable Randy Forbes (VA-04)
The Honorable Trent Franks (AZ-08)
The Honorable Joe Garcia (FL-26)
The Honorable Louie Gohmert (TX-01)
The Honorable Trey Gowdy (SC-04)
The Honorable Luis Gutierrez (IL-04)
The Honorable George Holding (NC-13)
The Honorable Darrel Issa (CA-49)
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries (NY-08)
The Honorable Hank Johnson (GA-04)
The Honorable Jim Jordan (OH-04)
The Honorable Steve King (IA-04)
The Honorable Raul Labrador (ID-01)
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren (CA-19)
The Honorable Thomas Marino (PA-10)
The Honorable Jerry Nadler (NY-10)
The Honorable Pedro Pierluisi (PR-AL)
The Honorable Ted Poe (TX-02)
The Honorable Cedric Richmond (LA-02)
The Honorable Bobby Scott (VA-03)
The Honorable Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05)
The Honorable Jason Smith (MO-08)
The Honorable Lamar Smith (TX-21)