

**Asian Pacific Islander Same-Sex Couples Speak Out
for Marriage Equality on Valentine's Day**

*Press Conference Coincides with Recent Amicus Brief Signed by
Nearly 30 API Organizations in Support of Statewide Lawsuit to Advance Marriage Equality*

Contact: Victor Hwang
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach
415-567-6255 (office) 415-505-6077 (cell)

When: Tuesday, February 14, 2006 at 10:30am (Valentine's Day)

Where: Assessor-Recorder's Main Office
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190
San Francisco

Appearing at the Press Conference: Phil Ting (San Francisco Assessor-Recorder), Victor Hwang (Managing Attorney at Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach), Christopher Punongbayan (Advocacy Director for Filipinos for Affirmative Action), David Chiu (President-Elect of the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area), and API same-sex couples: Cristy Chung and Lancy Woo, Stuart Gaffney and John Lewis, and Esther Lee and Lisa Chun.

SAN FRANCISCO – On February 14, 2006, several API community leaders and same-sex couples will speak out in support of marriage equality on Valentine's Day. The press conference coincides with a recent amicus brief signed by a broad coalition of nearly 30 Asian Pacific Islander organizations and filed with the California Court of Appeal in San Francisco that supports the *Woo v. Lockyer* suit challenging California's denial of equal marriage rights to same-sex couples.

Plaintiff Cristy Chung noted that she was deeply gratified that so many API organizations rose to support her family and thousands of families like hers. "Our community leaders realize how important family is to Asian Americans," said Chung. "We really appreciate our community standing up for Lancy and me, and our wonderful daughter Olivia. Olivia means the world to us, and we want her to grow up knowing that there's nothing second class about her family."

The brief relates the history of exclusionary marriage laws designed to prevent APIs from forming families and having the basic rights of citizenship to current laws discriminating against same-sex couples and their families. API communities "are intimately familiar with the enormous harm that marriage discrimination causes families, individuals, and communities," writes the brief's author Victor Hwang. Marriage discrimination "no matter how it is carried out, results in loving, committed human beings being treated as 'less than' equal under the law."

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