

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

# **Asian Pacific American Leaders Condemn Federal Marriage Amendment**

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San Francisco, California – The Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality (APACE) today announced its launch as a national ad hoc coalition of Asian Pacific American (APA) leaders and organizations determined to fight marriage discrimination against their communities. It represents a broad alliance of APA lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) affinity groups, as well as major APA and LGBT civil rights organizations across the country.

“Through anti-miscegenation laws, exclusion acts, and immigration restrictions, APA families have faced a long, heartbreaking legacy of marriage discrimination in the United States,” said Clay Kwong for the People of Color Media Program of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). “That shameful legacy continues to impact thousands of APA same-sex couples who are currently denied access to protections that marriage would afford them and their children.”

APACE encourages APA communities to support marriage equality and oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA), which if passed, would write discrimination directly into the Constitution. Throughout U.S. history, amendments to the Constitution have been adopted to expand or protect the rights of Americans. The FMA would instead limit civil rights.

“For same-sex couples in our communities, the basic privilege of hospital visitation rights and health care benefits would be forever unattainable. The goal of one day being able to sponsor non-citizen partners for immigration and naturalization would be forever unreachable,” explained Diana Ming Yin of Scripps College. “Ultimately, this amendment is anti-Asian American.”

In recent months, religious conservatives in APA communities have organized rallies in opposition to marriage equality in California. “They are not representative of our communities,” said Andy Wong of Marriage Equality California (MECA). “Indeed, fair-minded leaders of our APA communities support equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, and have played a pivotal role in spearheading the movement for marriage equality.”

These leaders include: Japanese Americans Al and Jane Nakatani, who helped organize the 1998 campaign against a proposed anti-marriage amendment to the

Hawaii state constitution; Chinese American Mabel Teng, who made history by marrying the first same-sex couple in San Francisco earlier this year; and, Indian Americans Mala Nagarajan and Vega Subramaniam, who are chief plaintiffs in a lawsuit seeking to overturn Washington state's 1998 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

"As South Asian American lesbians, we recognize the importance of marriage equality for the Asian American community," said Nagarajan and Subramaniam of Trikone Northwest. "Marriage is not just about individuals, but also about parents, families, and community. When our marriage is legally recognized and no longer stigmatized by our government, we fulfill that family and community responsibility."

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**Endorsements by:** Asians and Friends – Washington, Asian and Pacific Islander Family Pride (API Family Pride), Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian, Bisexual Women, and Transgender Network (APLBTN), Asian and Pacific Islander Queers United for Action (AQUA), Asian Lesbian Bisexual Alliance of Seattle (ALBA), Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team (APAIT), Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC), Asian Pacific Islander Queer Sisters (APIQS), Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women & Transgender Coalition (APIQWTC), Asian Pacific Islander PFLAG Los Angeles, Asian Pacific Islander Pride Council, Barangay (Los Angeles Filipino LGBT group), California Freedom to Marry Coalition, Chinese Rainbow Association (CRA), Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE), Community United Against Violence (CUAV), Equality California (EQCA), Gay Asian Pacific Support Network (GAPSN), Gay Asian Pacific Islander Men of New York (GAPIMNY), Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Honor Thy Children, Immigration Equality, Immigration Equality - San Francisco Chapter, Khush DC, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (Lambda Legal), L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, Love Sees No Borders, Marriage Equality California (MECA), Many Of The Homosexuals R Asian (MOTHRA) at the University of Michigan, National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC), National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (The Task Force), National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC), Our Family Coalition, PFLAG Northern California Chinese Chapter, San Francisco LGBT Community Center, Satrang (Los Angeles South Asian LGBT group), Trikone Northwest

**Mission Statement:** The Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality (APACE) recognizes the historical legacy of marriage discrimination in the United States and its profound impact on Asian Pacific American families. Through community education and coalition building, we seek to empower our APA communities to challenge this legacy and to confront present-day marriage discrimination against same-sex couples. In doing so, we want to affirm lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members in our communities and acknowledge the enriching presence of their love and lives.