

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Asian Pacific Americans Support Re-Introduction of Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act

Polls Reveal Strong Support for Marriage Equality Amongst California's Asian Pacific American Voters

[San Francisco, CA]—December 5, 2006— Asian Pacific American civil rights organizations and advocates of marriage equality hailed the introduction of the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act by Assemblyman Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, on December 4th. This legislation seeks to end the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage and the social support and legal protections that come with it.

According to a recent poll conducted by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California and the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, Asian Pacific American voters firmly support ending the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage. A majority (51%) of respondents in Los Angeles County, sixty-eight percent (68%) in San Francisco County, and seventy-two (72%) in the City of Oakland believed that same-sex couples should no longer be excluded from marriage. “Our poll reveals remarkably strong statewide support amongst Asian Pacific Americans voters for ending the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage,” noted Karin Wang, Vice-President of Programs for the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California.

“In strongly supporting marriage equality, Asian Pacific Americans communities affirm the basic idea that all families should be treated equally, with dignity and respect,” stated Luna Yasui, Policy Director at CAA | Center for Asian American Advocacy.

“California is home to the largest population of Asian Pacific American same-sex couples in the nation so the impact of the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act on our communities will be enormous,” stated Andy Wong of API Equality San Francisco, an organization dedicated to advancing marriage equality. According to a study conducted by the Williams Project at UCLA, one in 10 same-sex couples in California include at least one Asian Pacific American individual (13,000 in total) and over 50 percent of APA same-sex couples are raising children and would benefit from the protections that civil marriage provides for families.

"Being able to marry would mean the world to us and to our family," said Stuart Gaffney and his partner of 19 years, John Lewis.

Gaffney's mother, who is Chinese American, and his father, who is white, were only able to marry because California invalidated its laws against interracial couples' marrying. Gaffney noted, "Marriage discrimination has hurt our family for two generations running. Our family believes it's time for all loving, committed couples to have the right to marry, and they look forward to celebrating our wedding day. We hope to celebrate our 20th anniversary next year with a fully legal marriage."

API Equality

API Equality is a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals based in Los Angeles and San Francisco committed to working in our APA communities for equal marriage rights and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) families through education and advocacy.

CAA / Chinese for Affirmative Action/Center for Asian American Advocacy
CAA seeks to defend and promote the civil and political rights of Asian Americans in the interest of advancing multiracial democracy in the United States. Visit us at www.caasf.org

Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California
APALC is the nation's largest legal organization serving Asian Pacific Americans. The mission of APALC is to advocate for civil rights, provide legal services and education, and build coalitions to positively influence and impact Asian Pacific Americans and to create a more equitable and harmonious society. Visit us at www.apalc.org.

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