

# APIA VOICE



## The Official Newsletter of APIAVote-Michigan

March 2011

Friends,

2011 began not only with wintry blizzards but also new members of the APIAVote-Michigan Board of Directors and renewed energy and spirit.

The new Board members that officially began in January and have continued with us are Ahmar Iqbal (Fundraising Chair), Nancy Yan (Community Liaison – Southeast Michigan), and Julien Godman (Volunteer Coordinator).

Below are a few highlights from the first two months of 2011:

- ✓ APIAVote-Michigan joined the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative, which is a coalition of nonprofits from all segments of the community, including business, labor and public interest. The Collaborative believes that redistricting must be more transparent and open, with more involvement from the public. For more information, visit <http://drawthelinemichigan.org> and read Christina Kuo's article about redistricting in this newsletter.
- ✓ We celebrated the Lunar New Year with the Association for Chinese Americans and Tet with the Vietnamese American Association of Michigan. Happy Year of the Rabbit/Cat!
- ✓ Five APIAVote-Michigan volunteers went to Lansing on February 10 and delivered the results of our 2010 community survey along with a letter to all 110 state representatives and 38 state senators. Thank you to Senator Hoon-Yung Hopgood for hosting us in the morning at your office!
- ✓ Our Board held two mini-retreat sessions to get to know one another, discuss our short-term and long-term visions for APIAVote-Michigan, and begin a strategic planning process.
- ✓ Volunteers called our organization's members to urge them to call Governor Snyder expressing opposition to House Bill 4305, which is Michigan's version of Arizona's controversial anti-immigrant racial profiling law. This would require local police to act as immigration agents, stopping, questioning and even arresting anyone who might 'look undocumented'.
- ✓ House Bill 4305 is a direct assault on the immigrant community. Michigan's economy will never improve if we drive off immigrants and entrepreneurs. If you haven't already, please contact Governor Snyder asking him to promise to veto HB 4305 by calling 866-957-9069.

We've had a busy start to 2011 and look forward to your involvement this year! If you haven't yet become a member of APIAVote-Michigan, please consider joining today by visiting [www.apiaivotemi.org](http://www.apiaivotemi.org) or filling out the membership form that is enclosed in this newsletter.

Thank you for your commitment to the community,

Stephanie Chang

## APIAVote-Michigan holds "Gerrymandering" film screening and discussion

On March 19th, APIAVote-Michigan held a successful screening of the "Gerrymandering" documentary at the offices of the Multicultural Council of America in Troy. We had anticipated for 40 people to attend, but had a turnout of over 60 people! The film detailed the process and effects of how district lines are drawn, providing stunning insights especially with redistricting taking place this Spring.

Christina Kuo, Executive Director of Common Cause, served as the guest speaker, while Center of Michigan facilitated a discussion after the film.

Students from the Detroit Asian Youth Project were also present, fundraising by selling refreshments to those who came for the movie.

Thank you again to Christina, Center of Michigan, the Multicultural Council of America, and all that attended! For more on redistricting, see Christina's article inside.

### Mission Statement:

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote - Michigan is a non-partisan organization that serves the Asian Pacific Islander American community through civic participation, advocacy, and education.

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### **!ATTENTION!**

#### **Three Open Board Positions**

We are currently looking to fill our Community Liaison positions. One for Western Michigan, one for Southeast Michigan, and a general Community Liaison. Visit our website for details.



Our event was the only local screening of the film. Missed out but still want to see it? Go the film's website: [www.gerrymanderingfilm.com](http://www.gerrymanderingfilm.com) to see how!

Email: [michigan@apiavote.org](mailto:michigan@apiavote.org) Website: [www.apiaivotemi.org](http://www.apiaivotemi.org)  
Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

## Redistricting: Why is it important?

Guest article submitted by Christina Kuo, Executive Director of Common Cause

The next time you get to vote in a state or local election, your decision may already be made for you.

That's because the political partisans -- Democrats and Republicans -- are already hard at work drawing the districts that state and local candidates must run in. And in many cases, those districts will be drawn with the interest of one candidate (often an incumbent) or one political party (the one in charge of the district drawing), not those of voters.

It's called redistricting. Once every decade, after the U.S. Census data is made public, the election districts for the U.S. Congress, Michigan House and Senate, and even for local county and city offices, are redrawn.

The goal is to keep the number of people in each district even -- "one man, one vote," it's called. But beyond that, there are few rules that the map makers have to follow.

That means the people who control or influence the process often put their own interests first. As a result, many times when voters head to the polls in November, their ability to elect someone who truly represents them is limited.

It also means that their voices are often limited. In 2006, for instance, only 45 percent of Michigan voters supported Republican candidates for the state Senate. Yet, due to skillful map drawing, Republicans won 55 percent of the seats in the Senate, and were able to control the body, thwarting Democratic policies even though a majority of voters had supported Democratic candidates.

Similar actions in Wayne County, for instance, result in Democrats having a disproportionate number of seats in that county commission.

## Asian Americans are the Fastest-Growing Population in Michigan

APIAVote-Michigan urges redistricting bodies to consider the growing Asian American vote

Detroit -- The 2010 U.S. Census data released yesterday shows that the Asian American population in Michigan grew 34.9% from 2000 to 2010, to a total of 238,199 (Asian alone). Asian American population growth was followed closely by Hispanic/Latino population growth at 34.7%.

"While other populations are declining in Michigan, the Asian American community continues to increase steadily in size and political strength," says Stephanie Chang, president of APIAVote-Michigan. "APIAVote-Michigan hopes that, as new legislative district lines are drawn during this year's redistricting process, boundaries are drawn in a way that will ensure our Asian American voters to be adequately represented."

**"Partisan redistricting isn't good for Michigan. It puts the interests of politicians first -- and that of the citizens second."**

The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative is a group of non-profit organizations, business and labor, public interest and more, that has come together with a goal of making redistricting more transparent and open, with more involvement from the public and less from partisan individuals.

The Collaborative believes the goal of the redistricting should be structured to promote fair, competitive and representative districts. Redistricting must be based on the concerns of the citizens of Michigan, not the needs of elected officials or political parties. More competitive districts will enhance the voice of voters.

This isn't a partisan concern. In Wayne County, where Democrats control the redistricting process, it is likely that districts will be redrawn to help ensure that incumbent Democratic county commissioners win seats and that Democrats will continue to have a large margin on the county board.

In the Michigan Legislature, where Republicans control the process, districts are expected to be redrawn in a way that helps ensure most incumbent Republicans will win in the next election, allowing Republicans to maintain a majority in the House and Senate.

APIAVote-Michigan has launched a redistricting advocacy project. The organization will be contacting county and state elected officials to ask that the redistricting process be transparent and allow for input from constituents. In addition, the non-partisan organization will propose its own suggested alternate redistricting maps.

"My county, Oakland County, has the highest number of Asian & Pacific Islander Americans compared to any other county in Michigan," says Nancy Yan, board member of APIA Vote-Michigan. Oakland County leads at 68,082 with Wayne County following closely at 46,319. "I want to make sure that Asian American voices are included during the redistricting process so that my vote will count in election years to come."

Christina Kuo, executive director of Common Cause Michigan and spokesperson for the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative, says the goal is to affect the redistricting process in 2020 -- and nobody knows which party will be in charge then.

"Partisan redistricting isn't good for Michigan," said Kuo. "It puts the interests of politicians first -- and that of the citizens second."

As Congressman Bobby Shilling of Illinois -- a Republican, I might point out -- says, "Rather than allowing the politicians to go in and pick the voters, we should allow the voters to pick the politicians."

The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative is beginning a process of educating people around the state about the importance of redistricting, how it works, how it hurts Michigan, and how it can be reformed -- if the voters insist that it be reformed.

Many other states already are taking the lead in this matter, and giving the people a bigger say in redistricting. It's time for Michigan to join these states and reduce partisan legislative redistricting.

Here in Michigan, Republican state Rep. John Walsh introduced legislation that would place Michigan's redistricting process in the hands of the nonpartisan Legislative Services Bureau.

You can learn more by coming to one of the collaborative's meetings in coming months, and visit its website at <http://drawthelinemidwest.org/michigan> or search for the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

### Events Calendar

Sunday, April 10th

Youth Leadership Corps Meeting  
Topic: Immigration History  
Location: TBA

Contact Theresa or R.J. for more information.

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## APIAVote-Michigan's Youth Leadership Corps: Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow

As Senator Hopgood related during his interview in our last issue, a political career can begin simply by getting involved at a young age. The Youth Leadership Corps exists to provide high school students the skills and opportunities to explore the political arena. APIAVote-Michigan aspires to train a new generation of politically conscious citizens who can educate others on issues pertinent to the Asian American community. Through workshops, volunteering, and social activities, members of the Youth Leadership Corps are put on a path toward a possible future career in politics.

On March 19th, the Youth Leadership Corps had their first social activity at the year: laser tag at Laser Quest in Madison Heights! Following our "Gerrymandering" event, the YLC joined with the DAY Project youth for a rousing game of laser tag. Congratulations to APIAVote-Michigan President Stephanie Chang for placing 2nd out of 35 competitors!

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 10th, location to be announced. We will be holding a workshop on Asian American immigration history.

This year, we also plan to cover health issues, the "generation gap," interviewing skills, and much more. Aside from laser tag, other social activities will include a bowling night, movie night, and whatever else we can think of!

In addition to skill building and issue training, time spent participating in the YLC counts as community service hours that meet class or student organization requirements.

For more information, contact:

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- ✓ Are you a high school student?
- ✓ Are you interested in learning about issues that affect your community?
- ✓ Do you want to develop your leadership skills?
- ✓ Do you need community service hours?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, join us in the



Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote- Michigan

# Youth Leadership Corps

### APIAVote-Michigan

#### Board of Directors 2010-2011

*President:* Stephanie Chang  
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*Community Liaisons – Southeast Michigan:* Nancy Yan  
*Volunteer Coordinator:* Julien Godman

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 Dr. Syed Taj  
 Ehsan Taqbeem  
 Arthur Wang  
 Marie Weng  
 Charlie Xiong  
 Ricardo Villarosa  
 Sook Wilkinson  
 Jaye Yang  
 Denise Yee

# 2010 Community Survey Results

From June to October 2010, APIAVote-Michigan interns and volunteers conducted a voluntary community survey to gain insights into the trends and attitudes of Asian American community members. 208 surveys were collected at places of worship, community events, festivals, and sports tournaments.

Here are the results of the survey. According to the data, the majority of Asian Americans believe that multilingual accommodations should be made at the polls in order to allow limited English speaking citizens to exercise their right to vote.

The data also reveals that Asian Americans support granting legal status to undocumented immigrants as long as they registered with the government, payed taxes, and learned English.

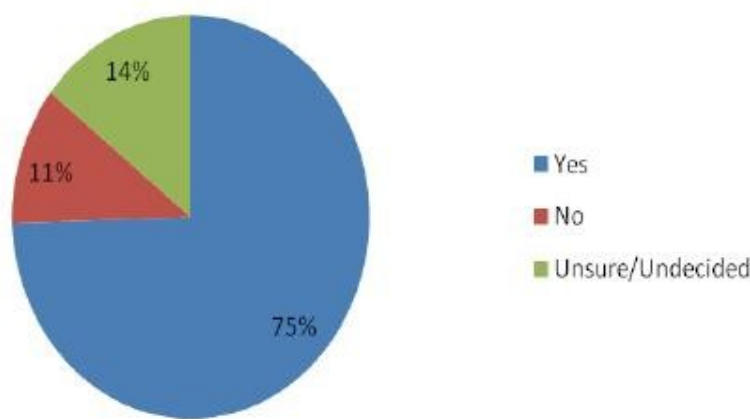
In addition to several background questions, the survey participants were asked two issue questions:

1. Do you think translated ballots and election materials should be provided in some jurisdictions to increase access to the vote for those that are English language learning/limited English proficient?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure/Undecided
2. Would you support giving legal status to undocumented immigrants that agree to register with the government, pay taxes, and learn English?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure/Undecided

## Issue question #1 – Translated Ballots/Election Materials

*Do you think translated ballots and election materials should be provided in some jurisdictions to increase access to the vote for those that are English language learning/ limited English proficient?*

**Translated Ballots Distribution**

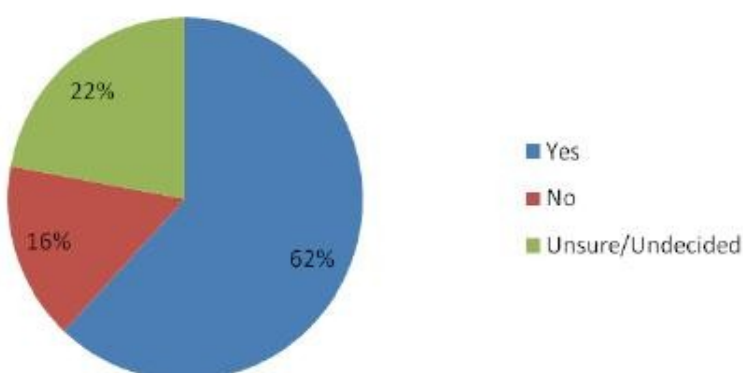


	Yes	No	Unsure/Undecided
Female	77%	8%	15%
Male	73%	17%	10%
Chinese American	89%	7%	4%
Hmong American	64%	7%	29%
Indian American	70%	21%	9%
Macomb County	68%	18%	14%
Oakland County	75%	18%	7%
Wayne County	75%	7%	18%

## Issue Question #2 – Immigration Reform

*Would you support giving legal status to undocumented immigrants that agree to register with the government, pay taxes, and learn English?*

**Legal Status Distribution**



	Yes	No	Unsure/Undecided
Female	69%	10%	21%
Male	61%	23%	16%
Chinese American	68%	7%	25%
Hmong American	75%	7%	18%
Indian American	61%	27%	12%
Macomb County	82%	14%	4%
Oakland County	59%	23%	18%
Wayne County	62%	13%	25%