

APIA VOICE



The Official Newsletter of APIAVote-Michigan

October 2010

Friends,

It is truly amazing to look back and reflect on the growth of Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote -Michigan since our beginnings in 2007. In less than four years, we have been active in two major elections, registering almost 1500 voters in our community, holding a half dozen educational forums, training new leaders, and working with supporters like you to make sure Asian American voters get out to the polls to vote!

The November 2, 2010 election is one of the most important elections. We have the opportunity to decide who will serve our state and who will represent our local communities. I am voting on November 2 because voting is the most important way we can participate in the United States democracy. I am voting so I can help be a voice for other members of our community that are not yet citizens or 18 or older. Lastly, I am voting and working together with you to increase the Asian American community voice so that those that we elect next Tuesday better address issues affecting our community. Will you be voting on November 2? What are your reasons for voting?

In the days leading up to Tuesday, November 2, you can become an informed voter. The APIAVote-Michigan website (www.apiaivotemi.org) has a plethora of materials that can assist you!

Finally, we can't do this important work without active participation from people like you. Please take a moment to donate, become a member, or volunteer with APIAVote-Michigan in the week before the election to call Asian American voters across the state! We are grateful for your support.

Thank you and happy voting!

Stephanie Chang
President
APIAVote-Michigan

Casting your vote on November 2nd: Voting Information

Voting can be a hectic experience, especially for first time voters. Make sure you are prepared to perform your civic duty on November 2nd!

Who and what should I vote for?

The midterm elections will determine who will serve as our state and public officials, and Proposal 1 and Proposal 2. With so many decisions to make, it can be difficult to gather enough information to cast an educated vote. Luckily, there are a variety of printed and online resources available that can ease your decision making. Voting guides can be obtained at any of our events, but if you missed our candidate forums on October 22nd and 24th, we still have an event on October 30th you may still attend (more information in the 'Upcoming Events' section).

Online voting guides are especially convenient. We recommend the following links:

The League of Women Voters (<http://www.lwvmi.org>) has an extensive voting guide organized by office and district.

<http://www.vote411.org> features a "build your own" voting guide that will cut your time in the booth.

The Michigan Participation Project (<http://www.michparticipationproject.org>) is full of helpful information, including guides, poll locations, and absentee ballots.

How do I vote?

Speaking of poll locations, you'll need to vote at the location designated by your registered

address. You can find your poll location at www.michigan.gov/vote or the website above. Alternatively, ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) will have a dedicated staff member available to assist people in locating their polling locations. Please call 313-843-2844 to speak to them on Election Day.

Once you know your poll location, make sure you set aside time to vote on November 2nd. The polls are open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM, so plan accordingly. Be sure to bring a photo ID, as it is required. Also refrain from wearing or displaying election-related materials at the polls – such materials are prohibited in and within 100 feet of the entrance of the polling place.

Please pass this information on to all voters! Your voice counts!

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.

Contents

Voting Information: Page 1

October 22 and 24 Candidate Forums:
Page 2

Youth Leadership Corps Update: Page 2

Upcoming Events: Page 2

Interview with Bing Goei (R), Candidate,
State Representative, 75th District: Page 3

Interview with Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D),
Candidate, State Senate, 8th District:
Page 4

Oakland and Macomb County Candidate Forums, October 22nd and 24th

APIAVote-Michigan held candidate forums in Oakland and Macomb Counties on October 22nd and 24th. The Oakland candidate forum was co-sponsored by the Michigan Korean Weekly and the Epoch Times and held at the Troy Community Center. The Macomb County forum was held at the Mongolian Buffet in Warren, co-sponsored by the Filipino Star News of Michigan.

Board of Governors.

Audience members were given the opportunity to hear candidate introduce themselves and speak briefly on their campaign platforms before fielding questions. Many candidates answered questions on the economy and immigration, which appeared to be the main issues of concern within the Asian American community.

Candidates for Secretary of State, seats in the U.S. and State House of Representatives and the State Senate from across different voting districts were in attendance, as well as candidates running for County commission and the Wayne State University

Afterwards, audience members and candidates had ample time to engage each other in conversation, over refreshments. Thank you to all that attended, and we wish all the candidates the best of luck at the election!

APIAVote-Michigan's Youth Leadership Corps gear up for Fall

Our Youth Leadership Corps (YLC) held their first official meeting of the new school year on October 10th at the offices of the Multicultural Council of America in Troy.

The purpose of the YLC is to encourage civic participation within Asian American youth from all over Michigan, with the intention of creating a group of youth ambassadors who can effectively educate their peers on a variety of issues, as well as communicate their concerns to their parents and others of voting age. After a curriculum revolving around mentoring, issue education, and skill training, YLC alumni will emerge as politically conscious and capable leaders in their communities.

Due to the election season, the first meeting focused on phone bank training.

Youth participants were briefed on a telephone script used for the phone banking events in the days leading up to November 2nd. The youth then practiced by calling their coordinators, to simulate an actual call.

Callers were exposed to a variety of different calls, such as dealing with people who had mistaken the phone banker for a telemarketer, and leaving voice mails, and then critiqued themselves in order to identify their strengths and the areas that would need some improvement.

The next YLC meeting will be on November 14th, location yet to be determined. Be on the lookout for updates via email and on our website.



Candidate forums are an excellent opportunity to personally interact with current and aspiring public officials.

Upcoming Events...

Saturday, October 30, 2010

Fuji Japanese Buffet & Lounge
32153 John R. Road - Madison Heights, MI 48071

You're invited to attend PCCM's town hall gathering at Fuji Japanese Buffet in Madison Heights. Attorneys Reggie Pacis, Elaine Calderon & David Vink will preside over topics regarding immigration basics, inspired laws, H-1B classification and options.

2:00-2:15 pm: Registration/Introductions
2:15-3:15pm: Immigration Discussion
3:15-4:00pm: Open Forum

4:00-5:30pm: Appetizers, Networking & APIA Vote "Get Out The Vote!" Phonebank. Bring your cell phone.

For more information, PCCM CONTACT Reggie Pacis @ 313.983.6929, Elaine Calderon @ 313.784.9226, David Vink @ 586.580.3006, Ryan Rosario @ 586.808.4568 or visit www.pccmichigan.org

Monday, November 1, 2010

Get Out the Vote! Phone Banking
5:00-8:00 pm

Stephanie Chang's Detroit home
(Address will be sent after signing up)

To sign up, contact Nancy Yan at yan.nancy@gmail.com or by phone at 734.726.0288

Tuesday, November 2, 2010

Election Day
Polls open 7:00 am-8:00 pm
Check www.michigan/vote for your polling location
Bring your photo ID!

Sunday, November 14, 2010

Youth Leadership Corps Meeting
2:00-4:00 pm
Location TBD

Interested in joining the YLC? Please contact Theresa Tran at therestran@gmail.com

Interview with Bing Goei, Republican State Representative Candidate (75th District)

Interview conducted by Nancy Yan, Fall 2010 Intern

Q: How do you think being Asian American has had an impact on your life and or your decision to run for office?

A: Well, being Asian American has affected my life in the sense that I bring to my life different depths of life experiences. I lived in other countries then I immigrated to the United States. I was born in Jakarta, Indonesia and lived my early childhood years there. Then I lived in the Netherlands as a political refugee because Indonesia was a Dutch colony at one time so I lived there for another 5 some years and then I arrived in the United States January of 1960 at the age of 11. So most of my life has been lived in the United States but the simple fact is that as an Asian American, you are considered an Asian American simply because of your principal features so your experience is somewhat different than others who are from the majority culture. Whether it had an influence on me in making the decision to run for the state office, I think so, I think what it had me do is recognize that as Asian Americans, we must become more actively involved in the community whether it's political, or non-profit, or charity type of thing. We must be more visible and more contributing to the richness of the community that we live in. So I have been doing that in all my years living in Grand Rapids. I have been actively involved in the business community, I've been actively involved in civic affairs, in charity work, and it was a natural progression for me to take a look at the political arena as the next step of being able to contribute and participate in the life of the community.

Q: If you were elected, what are some of the top issues you would like to address?

A: The issues I would like to address is not so much an Asian American issue, it's a people issue. I think what I would like to address as a small business owner are economic development issues especially as they pertain to the core urban centers of our cities. My district I am running for includes the Grand Rapids urban core center of the city, so I have always been concerned about the economic development, especially in those areas. I think economic development that can be beneficial for all of us and create more businesses in those particular communities will help us a great deal because more people can get jobs and more jobs can create more revenues and give people hope and give people an opportunity to purchase products which creates again revenues so economic development will be my main focus for my participation in Lansing.

Q: What is the top issue you think is facing the Asian American community?

A: For the Asian American community, I think that we have the opportunity to contribute a great deal. We have many talents, we have many skills, and we just need to step up and say here we are and here I am and am willing to participate in the process with the communities that we live in. The other part of it is that I think the Asian American community will have to be participating in the discussion about immigration and how the conversation on immigration can positively or negatively impact our presence in our communities.

Q: What does the Republican Party stand for in your eyes?

A: I am part of the Republican Party because of President Gerald R. Ford who I believe is not a politician, he's a statesman. He was willing to have conversations with anyone and everyone irrespective of their party affiliation. He was willing to do what was needed to be done and what was right to be done for everyone, not just Republicans or Democrats. I think that for me, that's the value that I hold as a Republican candidate. I am more concerned with what is going to be the impact of my decisions on everyone and not just the party affiliations. I look at the wellbeing of the whole district that I represent and the whole state I live in.

Q: How did you come to become involved in the party?

A: I've never been deeply involved with the party. I'm really a political novice in that sense. Again my party affiliation decision again was based on a situation that occurred in our family's lives in the 1960s where at that time Representative Gerald Ford stepped in to address a discrimination issue that my father was experiencing and he stepped in because no one else wanted to step in to address it in Grand Rapids. When friends of my father went to Gerald Ford and said this is wrong and something needs to be done, he listened to the situation and said this is wrong and he stepped in. So my party affiliation is really a sense of loyalty to what President Ford did on behalf of my family. I have never really been actively involved or politically involved. I've always been actively involved in serving the community in other ways, not so much in a political way, so this is really a new avenue for me to serve and contribute to the people of the 75th district.

Q: What would you like to say to the Asian American community to encourage them to get out and vote?

A: We, as a group of people, I think, so thinking for myself, I have been very blessed and for given a great deal by this wonderful country so we must return and show our appreciation for the things we have received in this country by actively participating in the voting process. Then I would like to encourage those who have the time, the energy, and the commitment and the passion to go beyond the voting process and actively participate by the actual running for the political offices. I think it is very important for the Asian Americans population to become more visible and more actively involved in the public policies of our cities, of our state, of our nation because we do have something to contribute and we have a perspective that is needed to be heard to enrich everyone, not just for ourselves, but to enrich everyone and we can't do that if we continue to stay quietly and silently on the sidelines. We have to become involved and actively involved.

APIAVote-Michigan

Board of Directors 2009-10

President: Stephanie Chang
Vice President: Prasanna Vengadam
Secretary: Theresa Tran
Treasurer: Jessica Wioskowski
Events Chair: William Dechavez
Communications Chair: R.J. Quiambao
Membership Chair: Jun Han
Community Liaison – West Michigan: Hannah Feikema
Community Liaisons – Southeast Michigan (duo position): Lisa Chin & Nikhil Parekh
Volunteer Coordinator: Regina Tsang

Advisory Board

Hoon-Yung Hopgood, *Honorary Chair*
 Sen. Hansen Clarke
 Mi Dong
 Ying Gee
 Arcie Gemino
 Minnie Morey
 Ed Navarra
 Daksha Pandit
 Iqbal Singh
 Sam Singh
 Linh Song
 Dr. Syed Taj
 Ehsan Taqbeem
 Arthur Wang
 Marie Weng
 Charlie Xiong
 Ricardo Villarosa
 Sook Wilkinson
 Jaye Yang
 Denise Yee

Interview with Hoon-Yung Hopgood, Democrat State Senate Candidate (8th District)

Tell us a little about yourself:

I was born in Korea, actually. Came here when I was 19 months old. Was adopted and grew up in Taylor, Michigan – that's where I came to from Korea. Went to the local schools and graduated from Truman High School. I was able to go to the University of Michigan, studied political science, among other things there, and got my undergraduate degree in '96. I ended up working on a campaign right after college, and that was a big campaign year, and so that was a great experience for me. The guy who ran, who I was helping ran for state representative and ended up winning one of the closest races in the state, so it was just all around a really good experience. I ended up working in Lansing as a state legislative aide for a number of years, and then in 2002 I ended up running for state representative. I ran for the guy...for the seat for the guy I was working for. His name was Ray Basham, and so I ran to succeed him. He's from my area, obviously. I was successful in doing that and then I served in the Michigan House, and ended that in December of 2008 and now I'm running for the state senate. So that's kind of in a nutshell, a little bit about me.

Did your identity as an Asian American have any impact on your decision to get involved or start a political career?

You know, my dad really rubbed off on me. He was involved on the City Council in Taylor, he's involved with the Teacher's Union here in Michigan, so I kind of got those things rubbed off on my growing up. You know, it's something that I thought about, but it didn't have a major decision on whether or not I was going to run. It was just a matter of how would this impact my potential candidacy, so that was kind of the thought process that went on. It was just one of those things where the decision is, "Are you going to run?" and then you figure out how to do that.

Why did you choose to align yourself with the Democratic Party?

Big influence from my dad. He was a Democrat. He was very involved with the Democratic Party and I grew up with that. I worked on campaigns and campaigned for other people before I really knew what it was all about, and going to the University of Michigan and going over and becoming my own person really helped solidify some of my thoughts and concerns about how this world works and why I'm a Democrat. So, it was something that's evolved over time, however, started at a pretty young age, I think.

What are some of your top issues that you would address if elected?

The economy is really a major issue. We're downriver. You know, we're blue collar manufacturing, auto...so really addressing some of those economic issues. People are looking for jobs. People need work, and in some cases, people need hope to know that there's something else out there. So those are definitely some of the things I want to work on – the whole economic issue and trying to get our economy moving again, support manufacturing, support autos as much as I can. But also, sort of look for other industries, look for ways to diversify what we do in Michigan so that there is other opportunities for people. Education is a major part of that, so working on the education system, supporting and at the same time challenging it to do things differently or to do things better is a major part of the work I want to do.

How do you think these issues affect the Asian American community?

There's issues that I think are a little more specific to the Asian American community, but there's these general big issues that everyone cares about, so I think the economy is certainly something that everyone cares about. Part of the Asian American community's existence in Michigan is based on the auto sector and manufacturing, however that's not the whole story, so the extent that I can support autos and manufacturing affects the community. I'm also looking at ways the community has grown, changed, and all the different opportunities that are possible there. That's where some of the diversification comes into play. Everyone cares about education, and I think for Asian Americans that's certainly true, and we're looking into improve the system and make sure there are opportunities that are broad based that are available to everyone.

As a community that in some ways has an immigrant basis, or a large number of immigrants and have English as a second language, I think there are some issues to access different services – maybe within education, but also health care, the basic things like voting rights – something your organization if particularly focused on. I just think that if people know what their rights are and they're equipped to access whatever services they are entitled to – I think that's one of the issues that people have issues with. Maybe it's a language thing, or maybe it's a lack of familiarity, or maybe it's the social network that Asians engage in. Whatever the causes let's figure out the barriers and try to knock them down.

Why do you think it's important for Asian Americans to get out there and vote?

I think it matters on a number of different fronts, but I think so just our voices are heard.

And I think that if there are issues that are out there that affect our community and we're not voting and not participating to the extent that we could, then maybe that will mean that our voices aren't heard as much as they should be, and just to make sure we're participating in the process, that we engage our elected officials and they know that we're here and that we have concerns is very important.

Do you have any advice for Asian American youth who would like start a political career?

I think it's an incredible arena to get into. The practical advice is just to get involved, to participate, whether it's through campaigns or through organizations, and in voting. Make sure you know who you're voting for and why, and what they stand for – things like that and how they impact your life. One is just a basic level of being involved, and that's what I would say to anyone in the Asian American community, but particularly youth and you think about someone doing something for the first time and they're learning a lot as a younger person. I think it's a great opportunity to see something you may not have known was out there. So that's what I tell people: if you cut off certain opportunities for yourself then you don't even know what is possible, so being involved and even at some point running for office is a way to think about yourself in a different way and to get outside of whatever confines that you or other people have placed for you.

There's more, but the other piece is to be yourself and own yourself, and be comfortable with that. If you try to be someone else to run for office, I don't think that works to that extent. It doesn't let you sell the best attributes about yourself. So I think that's very important. There's this genuineness that I think people are looking for and want to see in their elected officials and candidates, so that's one thing that people can do. Think about the issues and think about where they stand and what's important to them, but then as a person, to be true to yourself and to run as a candidate that way, or to be involved with whatever you're involved with, based on who you are.

Any parting shots or last things to add?

I certainly hope everyone gets out and votes on November 2nd. It's a very important election, but beyond that, I think every election is very important. Elections are not just one day events, and I think it's very important for us as a community to be involved and aware of the issues that impact us, our communities, our state, and our country. As much as I can suggest or support people wanting to be involved in their communities, I think it's a wonderful thing.