

Currents

Asian American Pacific Islander Community Newspaper Serving
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Fighting Trump

14 UC Davis students and nine recent graduates in March had their student F-1 visas revoked by Trump. As of April 24th, the federal government has reinstated the visas of 10 of the 23 students. CSUS says 70 of their international students had their visas terminated and currently 15 of those students have had their visas and SEVIS records (Student and Exchange Visitor Information Service) restored. Nationwide 1,500 students have been affected with no clear reasons; some claim that Trump's attack on student visa has been arbitrary. An estimated 100 lawsuits have been filed; many courts have issued restraining orders calling Trump's visa attacks illegal. Originally Trump cancelled visa for students who participated in pro-Gaza demonstrations, but students from India and China were also caught up in the sweep.

Editor: SEVIS stands for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, which is a web-based system used by the US Dept

of Homeland Security to track and monitor information about international students and exchange visitors in the United States. It helps ensure compliance with immigration regulations and maintains records of nonimmigrant students and their programs.

AAPI groups react after Trump student visa revocations reversed

By Randall Yip, Executive Editor
AsAmNews.com

An article in partnership with URL Collective, April 25, 2025

Asian American and immigration groups are reacting with caution to an announcement from the Trump administration that it is reversing its decision to revoked about 1,400 student visas and to change the immigration status of 4,700 more in a government data base known as SEVIS.

The action caused a lot of uncertainty and fear among international students.

"We continue to be deeply concerned about the lack of transparency and the chilling effect this has had on international scholars. Restoring these records is only the beginning. The government must ensure that any future actions are grounded in due process and uphold our country's commitment to the rule of law, freedom, and fairness," said Gisela Perez Kusakawa, Executive Director of Asian American Scholar Forum in a statement sent to AsAmNews.

According to a survey by the American Immigration Lawyers Association, nearly half of international students impacted were from India- with a significant number from China and other Asian countries including South Korea, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, AAJC said the earlier action by the White House only served to impede America's desire to attract top talent from around the world.

Inside Currents: APSEA - 3
WONG KIM ARK - 5



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"Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC welcomes this policy reversal," said Joanna YangQing Derman, Director of Anti-profiling and National Security in an email to AsAmNews. "However, the administration's prior decision to strip hundreds of international students of their legal status without cause inflicted lasting harm. Targeting students without explanation or due process not only upended lives—it sent a chilling message about the future of American innovation."

Some students who saw their status change without warning self-deported and already left the country. According to USA Today, more than 200 students removed from SEVIS won court orders preventing the government from taking any action against them.

"The agency vexatiously overstepped when it revoked student records in SEVIS without, what appears to be, going through the proper vetting channels," said a statement from

Continued on Page 2

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Fighting Trump

Continued from Front Page the American Immigration Lawyers Association. “Across the country and the world, students, universities, and attorneys are breathing a collective sigh of relief today and at least for now. It’s a sad reality that this administration’s chaotic policies are the new normal. As we move forward, it is crucial to continue to address and rectify these harms and other similar threats to ensure that such overreach does not happen again.”

The BBC reports the Justice Department is now reviewing its procedures and expects to come up with a new system to examine and terminate student visas.

TEXAS/land laws: On March 29th, 50 AAPI Texans – including elected officials and community members – descended on the Texas capitol in Austin to protest 2 Alien Land bills. Texas Senate Bill SB17 and House Bill HR17 would restrict and ban real estate ownership by certain foreign nationals. Bill backers claim that these laws are necessary for “national security.” Texas House Representative Gene Wu says these laws were “unconstitutional back then and are unconstitutional now.” SB17 restricts/prohibits persons, businesses and government agencies from China, Iran, North Krea and Russia from buying real estate in Texas and includes a provision allowing the government to seize the property without notification or opportunity to dispute the taking. HR17 prohibits H1B, L1 and other visa holders from owning land and authorizes criminal charges (felony, prison, \$250,000 fine or 50% of the property’s market value.) AAPI advocates say that real estate agents will not want to sell to AAPIs, that limiting/preventing ownership is diminishing AAPIs’ economic power such as multigenerational wealth, the “national security” excuse based on race is just a racist ploy, that real “national security” law would identify property in sensitive areas regardless of the buyers’ identity. AAPIs number 2 million of Texas’ population and is the fastest growing racial group, yet Alice Yi (Asian Texas for Justice) says the bills profile AAPIs as 3rd class citizens.

FLORIDA/graduate students – In March, a federal judge in Florida judge issued a preliminary injunction stating that two Florida International University students – Zhipeng Yin and Zhen Guo both from China - can continue working for the university. The state of Florida has appealed the order. The students had filed a lawsuit challenging a Florida law which bans the state’s 12 public universities from faculty or student exchange programs, dual degree programs, research collaboration or similar programs from China, Russia, Iran, Korea, Venezuela and Syria unless the Florida Board of Governors approves the request. Both students had F-1 student visas and graduate teaching assistantship offers (which included stipends, tuition waivers, health insurance) at the university and postdoctoral associate positions with University of Florida professor Zhengfei Guan who is an agricultural economist

advising farmers on farm management with a focus on labor and market issues. Attorney Keliang “Clay” Zhu of the Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance says that so-called “national security threats” need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, not with a blanket racist law which targets only persons from particular countries is illegal; he adds that background checks during the visa interview application process already in place should identify security threats. Florida Chinese do have a history of inappropriate relationships with China, including an University of Central Florida lab assistant who smuggled submarine parts to China and was sentenced to prison; the lab assistant’s boss fled back to China; another Chinese professor was fired for unlawfully shipping probe needles to China and continuing to recruit Chinese graduate students even after being requested to stop; another Florida professor resigned in 2017 after university would not allow him to receive a \$200,000 donation from a Chinese entity.

FLORIDA – New College of Florida fired professor Kevin Wang on March 12th under Florida law SB846 (passed 2023) that bars universities from employing people who are not US citizens or lawful permanent residents from “countries of concern.” (See list above.) Wang sought asylum from China after being targeted for criticizing the Chinese government and was granted the right to work in the US. He taught Chinese language and culture at the Sarasota-based liberal arts college for 2 years. In March, the ACLU of Florida and the Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance sued the state, arguing SB 846 violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The lawsuit compares the law to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Wang plans to leave Florida, but will continue his asylum bid.

PENNSYLVANIA – Twelve Bhutanese green card holders were arrested by ICE and deported to Bhutan in March and April. They had all entered the US through a refugee resettlement program between 2008-2015. From 1980s to early 1990s, the Bhutanese drove 100,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese people out of the country and stripped them of their citizenship. Nepal held them in refugee camps for 20 years before all but 6,000-8,000 were resettled in the US and other countries. Nepal never granted them citizenship; they are stateless. ICE claims that they were enforcing Trump’s mission of removing criminal aliens and others who have violated immigration laws. Three are still in ICE custody, two with removal orders and one with a pending hearing in June. Three more were arrested in Ohio in mid April. Across the country at least 24 Bhutanese refugees have been deported. Attorney Craig Shagin says his client had a criminal case (drunk driving, fleeing from officer – not deportable offenses) which was dismissed on constitutional grounds, but was deported despite having a pending appeal. Court records show that each man deported had been convicted of crimes ranging from public drunkenness to felony assault. The deported men were flown on commercial flights to New

ABOUT CURRENTS

Currents is a free community newspaper published three times a year entirely by volunteers. Currents covers local and national issues and events affecting the AAPI communities of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Opinions expressed do not belong to APSEA or any other organizations participating in the newspaper and are those of the author or the Editorial Board only. The Editor reserves the right to reject prospective materials or advertisements. Currents is distributed by bulk mail and through other outlets. Currents articles may be reprinted without specific permission, but “Currents” and the author should be acknowledged. Next publication date: October/Fall 2025. Deadline: September 15, 2025. Circulation: 7,500. Editor: Pattie Fong. Distribution assisted by: The Sacramento Gazette (David Fong), Hach Yasumura, UCD Asian American Studies and Oto’s Market. Many graphics are by Randall Ishida (dec.) Advertising rates: 3.5” X 2” \$50; 5” X 6” \$80; 10” X 6” \$200. Currents has no physical office but donations, ads, address changes and other inquiries can be sent to PO Box 4163, Davis CA 95617 or to pmfong@hotmail.com

Currents’ mission: Tuskegee University’s Professor Charles Gomillion led the Tuskegee Civic Association, established in 10941, to win major court battles to protect voter rights. TCA’s mission state reflects its sense of civic responsibility and social justice: The study and interpretation of local and national trends and problems; the collection and dissemination of useful civic and political data; and intelligent and courageous civic action.” Currents has adopted this very worthy mission statement.

MANY THANKS TO MARIAN KUCHIDA, GLORIA IMAGIRE, ARTINA LIM, GRACE KIM AND WALTER MENDA for their recent donations to Currents to help defray the newspaper’s printing and postage expenses.

CURRENTS can be read online, uploaded as a community service by APSEA. Look for digital copies (past and current editions) at www.apsea.org under



Delhi, India, then flown to the international airport in Paro, Bhutan. From there they were driven to the borders of India or Nepal to be smuggled out of Bhutan.

ST. PAUL MINNESOTA “Hands Off” demonstration (photo) on April 5th was part of the nation wide protest against Trump extremism. The AAPI community was well represented there and in other parts of the country.

Dear Friends:

The Asian Pacific State Employees Association (APSEA) invites you to celebrate with us at our 50th anniversary celebration on Thursday, October 9, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Asian Pearl Restaurant. On this special evening, we will honor our legacy and recognize the contributions of five exceptional Asian Pacific Islander (API) state worker leaders. Together with fellow APSEA members, VIPs, elected officials, and API community leaders, we will celebrate their achievements as they are presented with the Excellence in State Leadership Award.

Our Story and Mission

APSEA began as a vision shared by a small group of Asian and Pacific Islanders in California State government. Their goal was to combat discrimination, improve hiring, and expand career opportunities. Through the dedication of our founders and supporters, we continue to advance careers, promote diversity, and advocate for the API community.

Why Your Support Matters

This momentous occasion is not only a celebration, but also a chance to drive change. Your financial sponsorship supports our core programs that empower our members to lead in California’s government and communities.

Our Key Initiatives

Pipeline Building Programs focus on expanding outreach to inspire younger generations, engage underserved communities, and strengthen partnerships with API organizations to promote careers in state service.

Professional Development Programs provide leadership training, networking opportunities, and mentorship to support upward mobility and long-term career growth.

EEO and DEI Advocacy efforts would allow us to collaborate with state employee associations and API community groups to advance equal opportunities, foster inclusivity, and empower APIs in state government roles.

A Legacy of Impact

Since our founding in 1975, APSEA has worked tirelessly to make a difference. As we mark 50 years, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing our mission and driving meaningful change. Your generosity will help us continue



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

APSEA 50th Anniversary Gala | October 9, 2025 | 6PM
Asian Pearl Restaurant | Stockton Blvd., Sacramento, CA

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Mona Pasquil Rogers

Mona Pasquil Rogers is APSEA's 50th keynote speaker. In her current role, she is the head of Public Policy Director for Meta. She served as the Appointments Secretary for Governor Jerry Brown from 2011-2019. Mona also served as the 47th and acting lieutenant governor of California from 2009-2010, the first woman, Filipina, and person of Pacific Islander heritage to hold the role.

APSEA is a 501c4 non-profit and non-political organization. Submit VIP names, company logo, ad copy by August 31, 2025 to Karen Lookingbill at president.apsea@gmail.com or Jacqui Nguyen at nguyen.jacqui@gmail.com

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APSEA’s 50th Anniversary Gala Sponsorship Form

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Make checks payable to: Asian Pacific State Employees Association, P.O. Box 22909, Sacramento, CA 95822
Other individual donations are welcome.

APSEA is a 501c4 non-profit and non-political organization. Submit VIP names, company logo, ad copy by August 31, 2025 to any of the email addresses below.
For additional information, email Karen Lookingbill at president.apsea@gmail.com or Jacqui Nguyen at nguyen.jacqui@gmail.com.

KL Lookingbill
Karen Lookingbill
APSEA President

Jacqui Nguyen
Jacqui Nguyen
1st Vice President and Gala Chair, Celebrating 50 Years of State Service

Combat Trump-ism: Vote Shareholder Proposals

As American democracy faces challenges from authoritarian rhetoric and policies associated with “Trump-ism”—including elements of white nationalism, corporate deregulation, and climate change denial—concerned citizens seek effective avenues for resistance. Beyond participating in political elections, another crucial platform for influence exists: *the shareholder ballot*.

Understanding Shareholder Power

Every year, a diverse group of investors—including faith-based organizations, pension funds, and individual activists—file shareholder proposals to urge corporations toward responsible practices on climate change, human rights, racial justice, and more, typically referred to as ESG (environment, social, governance) proposals. These proposals influence company policies and help shape the broader corporate, economic, and political landscape.

Individuals like John Chevedden often file the most proposals. Among Asian Americans, Jing Zhao is one of the most prominent filers. His activism focuses on corporate governance reforms, human rights, and socially responsible practices. Zhao has filed proposals at major corporations such as Tesla, Apple, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo, addressing board independence, executive pay, and ethical business practices in China.

Increasingly, anti-ESG proponents, such as the National Center for Public Policy Research (NCPPR) and the National Legal and Policy Center (NLPC), file proposals to advance the belief that diversity, equity, inclusion, and avoiding environmental damage harms investors and returns. These proposals can easily be mistaken for pro-ESG proposals unless read very carefully.

The Nature and Significance of Shareholder Proposals

Shareholder proposals are recommendations submitted by investors to be voted on during the company’s annual meetings. Common topics include:

- Climate Change: Addressing risks and advocating for emissions disclosures.
- Human Rights: Conducting due diligence, for example, in artificial intelligence and supply chains.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Promoting transparency and equitable practices.
- Corporate Spending on Elections and Lobbying: Disclosing donations to candidates, political action committees (PACs), and lobbying so investors and the public can learn what candidates and issues companies support.
- Worker Rights: Ensuring safety and fair compensation.

These initiatives hold significant weight. For instance, companies like Costco, Apple, and Disney have seen overwhelming shareholder support—over 98%—for defending DEI policies amid far-right opposition. Conversely, Target faced criticism for retreating from DEI initiatives. That sparked a backlash from civil rights advocates, customers, and even descendants of its founders.

Positioning of Proposals on Ballots

Environmental and social proposals are usually placed at the end of shareholder ballots after votes on board members and executive compensation. That placement can lead to these critical issues being overlooked. Shareholders need to review the entire ballot to ensure their values are represented. When companies hold their annual meetings online, voting is frequently cut off immediately after the

presentation of the last shareholder proposal, leaving no time for attendees to vote after weighing the proponent’s objections to the Board’s opposition statement, which may include misrepresentations. Therefore, it is crucial to vote before the meetings when possible.

The Broader Implications

The ascent of Trump-ism has led to coordinated efforts to undermine Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing. Right-wing attorneys general and corporate-backed PACs are attempting to curtail shareholder rights, suppress critical inquiries, and pressure companies to abandon climate objectives and DEI commitments.

In 2025, numerous proposals target companies involved in fossil fuels, labor exploitation, or activities undermining democratic processes. Voting on shareholder proposals serves as a direct method of advocacy.

How to Cast Your Vote on Shareholder Proposals

Below are some ways to increase your effectiveness.

- Review Proposals: Carefully examine all proposals, especially those at the end of the ballot addressing social and environmental issues.
 - Informed Voting: Vote in favor of proposals that align with your values on climate responsibility, DEI, and human rights. Resources like Proxy Preview (<https://www.proxypreview.org/>) and the ICCR Proxy Resolutions and Voting Guide (https://www.iccr.org/report_type/proxy-resolutions-and-voting-guide/) offer insights into many of these proposals.
- Direct Ownership (Brokerage Accounts): Look for proxy voting emails or mailings from your brokerage (e.g., Vanguard, Schwab, Fidelity) or their agents, such as Broadridge or Computershare.
 - Mail or Vote Shares Online.

Increasingly, shareholders are using free or low-cost proxy voting services to vote their shares automatically. As You Vote (<https://www.asyousow.org/our-work/asyouvote>) provides a progressive voting policy, automatically assisting shareholders to vote in line with their principles. Iconikapp (<https://www.iconikapp.com/>) uses artificial intelligence, allowing investors (and organizations like As You Sow and Third Act) to easily create voting profiles aligned with their values, which are then voted automatically. You can review and change such votes until the day before the annual meeting.

- Employer-Sponsored Plans (401(k), IRA)
 - Inquiry: Contact your plan provider to understand how proxy votes are cast on your behalf.
 - Advocacy: Encourage your employer to offer voting choices aligned with your values organizations. Organizations like As You Sow and the Asian Pacific State Employees Association (APSEA) may be able to help.



Conclusion

Each shareholder vote represents an opportunity to guide corporations toward ethical and sustainable practices. It’s a peaceful yet potent means to counteract Trump-ism, challenge oppressive systems, and advocate for environmental stewardship.

Corporate entities face a pivotal choice: uphold democratic values and social responsibility or yield to divisive and regressive influences. Informed and intentional voting can significantly influence this direction.

Review your next shareholder ballot thoroughly or have an artificial intelligence service such as Iconikapp do it for you when you receive your next shareholder ballot. Vote conscientiously and share the importance with others.

Additional Resources

“Anti-ESG Proposals Surged in 2024 But Earned Less Support” (<https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2024/07/31/anti-esg-proposal-surged-in-2024-but-earned-less-support/>)

CorpGov.net (<https://www.corpgov.net/>)

Council of Institutional Investors (CII) (<https://www.cii.org/>)

Iconikapp (<https://www.iconikapp.com/>)

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) (<https://www.iccr.org/>)

Proxy Preview (<https://www.proxypreview.org/>)

Author: Jim McRitchie publishes CorpGov.net, is a member of ICCR, donates to As You Sow, is a minor investor in over 300 companies, including Iconikapp, has filed hundreds of shareholder proposals, and was on the Investment Committee of APSEA a long time ago.

Trump attacks birthright citizenship

which US Supreme Court already decided in 1898 in U.S. v Wong Kim Ark

Norman Wong is the great grandson of Wong Kim Ark and finds himself to be spokesperson defending birthright citizenship (*jus soli* principle) now being attacked by President Trump. Wong told AsAmNews: “I wasn’t looking to honor my great-grandfather’s name in any way or keep this issue alive. What happened was this issue came to a head, I believe, when Trump started to take office, and then people started to contact me because birthright citizenship became a national issue, in a sense. And so, people started to contact me and I was willing to talk to them, and that’s my role. It’s not one I carved out for myself. It’s people asking me what I can do to help, in a sense, by just giving my experience and a little bit of my family history.” That Trump administration is now attacking that 127 year old US Supreme Court decision.

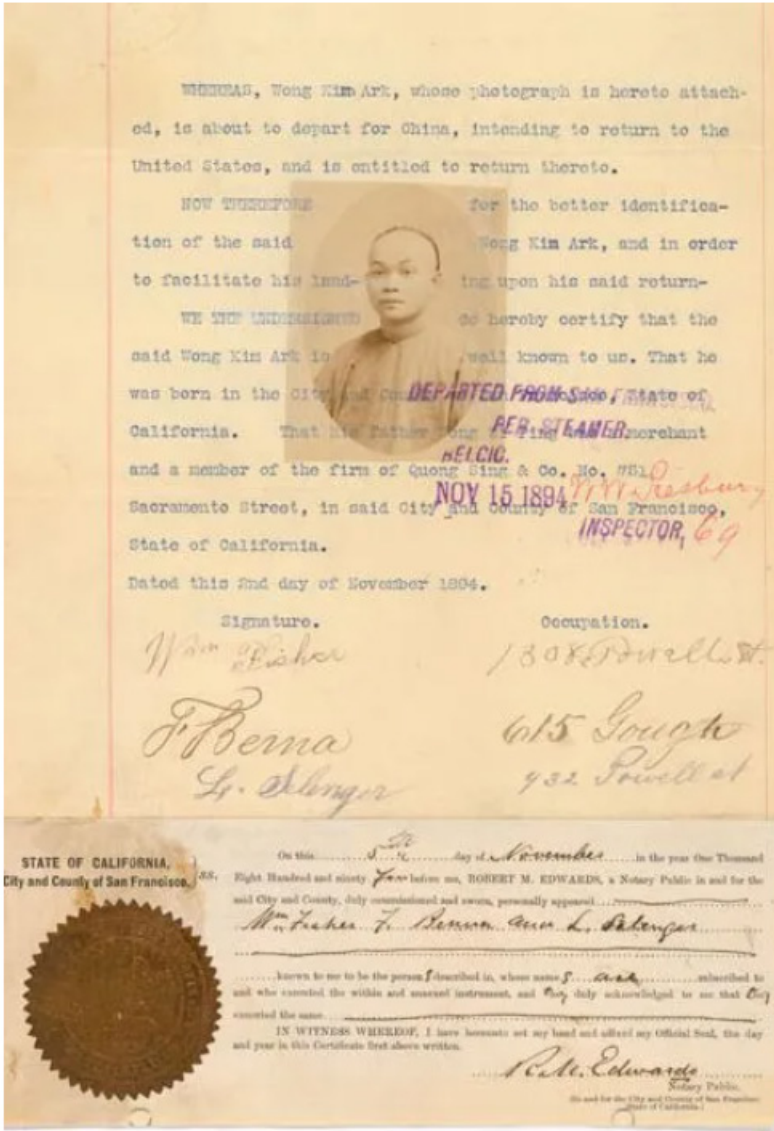
14th Amendment of the US Constitution Citizenship Clause (1868) *All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.*

United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1898, 169 U.S. 649) US Supreme Court said with respect to Chinese Americans: “*a child born in the United States, of parents of Chinese descent, who, at the time of his birth, are subjects of the Emperor of China, but have a permanent domicile and residence in the United States, and are there carrying on business, and are not employed in any diplomatic or official capacity under the Emperor of China*” automatically becomes a U.S. citizen at birth. This decision has never been challenged until Trump took office.

On January 21th, Trump signed Executive Order 14160 “Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship” to terminate birthright citizenship. Actually, only a constitutional amendment can change the constitution to end birthright citizenship. Trump claims that birthright citizenship encourages people to enter the US illegally and rewards their newborns with citizenship.

Backstory: Wong Kim Ark was born in 1870 to Chinese immigrants Wee Lee and Wong Si Ping at 751 Sacramento St in SF. In 1871 the Los Angeles Chinatown Massacre resulted in 18 deaths. In 1877 violent anti-Chinese riots broke out in SF’s Chinatown. In 1878, his parents who owned a grocery store voluntarily return to China, probably due to the racial violence and their lack of US citizenship; they never come back. They were never eligible for naturalization because in 1889 the In re Ah Yup decision (later affirmed by the Ozawa and Thind cases) stated that Chinese immigrants were not “free white persons” or “aliens of African nativity ... and person of African descent” – the only categories then eligible for naturalization.

After his parents resettled in China, Wong



traveled between China and US. At age 11, he returned to the US with an uncle and worked as a dishwasher and cook in a Sierra Nevada mining camp. In 1889 he went to China to visit, married 17 year old Yee Shee and they had a child Wong Yook Fun. Wong returned by himself to the US in 1890 and worked as a laborer and cook in SF. He sent money back to China to his family. In December 1894, Wong visited his wife and son in China and their second child was conceived.

Nine months later, in August 1895, Wong (then 22) returned to the US where John H. Wise, collector of customs, refuse to acknowledge his departure statement in which witnesses attested to his identity and legal status as a US citizen born on American soil. Wise ordered Wong deported under the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Wong fought his deportation and during the litigation was detained on a series of steamships moored off the SF coast. The Department of Justice was hungry to test Chinese Americans’ birthright citizenship in court. Wong was a perfect defendant – an adult with limited resources and social capital (appeal) and unlike the minors they tried to deport would not be separated from family.

A writ of habeas corpus was filed for Wong by attorney Thomas D. Riordan, retained by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The government did not dispute Wong’s identity, documents or SF as his birthplace as it did in other cases. The government argued that Chinese children born to noncitizens were ineligible for birthright citizenship because they, like their

parents, were the subjects of a foreign power. The government argued that Wong was not “subject to US jurisdiction.”

The district court ruled in Wong’s favor. The Dept. of Justice appealed to the US Supreme Court which heard the case in March 1897. The government argued that birthright citizenship should not apply to “the children of foreigners, happening to be born to them while passing through the country.” The majority held 6-2 in favor of Wong on March 28, 1898 that anyone required to obey US law was under the nation’s jurisdiction.

This decision settled the status of Chinese born in the US. But, it did not stop the government continuing to challenge Wong’s citizenship status: In October 1901 he was arrested crossing from Juarez into El Paso “in violation of the 1888 Chinese Exclusion Act,” was released from custody on a \$300 bond and it took 4 months to prove his identity and citizenship; in 1920, Wong’s son Wong Yook Fun arrived in SF but was sent back to China when immigration ruled that they were not related; in 1924 son Wong Yook Sue arrived, was initially denied entry, but later won his appeal and entered the US (Wong Yook Sue later admitted in the 1950-1960’s Chinese Confession Program that he was a “paper son.”)

Response to Trump’s Challenge

- “Born in the USA: Wong Kim Ark and the Fight for Citizenship” is an education program in March sponsored by a coalition of SF-based AAPI groups to explain to the broader community that the birthright citizenship right has already been established and that Trump is fomenting xenophobia (fear of strangers/foreigners) by attacking a 127 year old US Supreme Court decision.
- Resolution AJR 5 – denounces EO 14160, affirms California’s commitment to the 14th Amendment and honors Wong Kim Ark. The AAPI Legislative Caucus is championing the resolution which is still pending in the California Assembly.
- Plaque honoring Wong Kim Ark’s impact on birthright citizenship was installed on March 28th in SF Chinatown, culminating the “Born in the USA” week of events which included a book event, Chinatown tour, symposium and library book display.
- A letter opposing Trump’s attack on birthright citizenship can be found at www.caasf.org. For more information about opposing the executive order, contact Chinese for Affirmative Action at advocacy@caasf.org.



San Francisco Mayor Lurie presents Norman Wong, a descendant of Wong Kim Ark, with a proclamation of Wong Kim Ark Day honoring the legacy of birthright citizenship in this country.

Native Americans threatened, too

The US Supreme Court in Elk v Wilkins (1884) ruled that Native Americans were deliberately not granted automatic birthright citizenship and the right to vote under the Fourteenth Amendment because they are citizens of their tribal nations, not required to pay taxes, and not eligible for naturalization. This denial of citizenship and the vote was fixed by the Indian Citizenship Act (1924). Trump is using the Elk decision to bootstrap his argue for overturning birthright citizenship: he argues that the Elk decision supports “The United States’ connection with the children of illegal aliens and temporary visitors is weaker than its connection with members of Indian tribes. If the latter link is insufficient for birthright citizenship, the former certainly is,” citing Elk.

The Indigenous Foundation warns: “Know Your Rights - Unfortunately, the impacts of this bold executive order is causing chaos and trauma in Indigenous communities as ICE is wrongfully targeting Native Americans within the Navajo Nation. In this uncertain time it is important to know your rights. The Native American Rights Fund has posted important frequently asked questions regarding Immigration Enforcement. Most importantly know that as a Native American born in the US you are a citizen by federal law and that will not be taken due to the birthright guarantee by Congress per the Indian Citizenship Act. ICE cannot arrest you.” Source: “Birthright Citizenship and Indigenous Peoples” by Aaliyah Walton.

Native American Rights Fund says: Is the struggle for the rights of noncitizens’ children today connected to the ongoing struggle for Native rights?

Yes! The fight for the rights of marginalized communities has always been connected. From Dred Scott to John Elk to Wong Kim Ark—it is the joint struggle of minority and immigrant communities that have led to our established interpretation of the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment. Historically, as far back as 1898 when the Wong Kim Ark case was decided, there have been unsuccessful attempts to narrow the interpretation of the Citizenship Clause and other parts of the Fourteenth Amendment. This often involves an old tactic of pitting one marginalized group against another to create division—for example, saying that the Fourteenth Amendment was only meant to help African Americans, so the children of immigrants are not birthright citizens. But communities, including Native Americans and immigrants, are always stronger when we fight for justice together.

14th Amendment exists thanks to Black Americans fighting for the right to vote

It is possible to tell the story of the 14th Amendment’s adoption as one driven by the maneuvering of highly placed lawmakers—judges and members of Congress. But the story of the 14th Amendment, and in particular its birthright citizenship provision, is one of far more than court opinions and legislative acts. It is also a story of how African American activists set out to develop a framework that would let them combat racism. Over nearly four decades, beginning

in 1830, delegates attending the so-called colored conventions defined, debated, and advocated for the view that black Americans were birthright citizens. In 1868, with the ratification of the 14th Amendment, the rest of the nation caught up. Martha S. Jones, “Citizens: 150 Years of the 14th Amendment,” July 9, 2018

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Make Good the Promises. Reconstruction Citizenship. Who is included in “We the People”? Whose rights does the law protect?

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution is one of the nation’s most important laws relating to citizenship and civil rights. Ratified in 1868, three years after the abolishment of slavery, the 14th Amendment served a revolutionary purpose — to define African Americans as equal citizens under the law. Although its promises have not always been upheld, the 14th Amendment has provided African Americans and other groups in society with a legal basis to challenge discrimination, demand equal rights and protections, and effect change.

Deconstructing the 14th Amendment

The 13th Amendment, ratified in December 1865, made slavery illegal throughout the United States. But it did not address other fundamental questions about the status of newly freed African Americans. Were they citizens? Did they have the same rights as other Americans? To resolve these issues, Congress passed the 14th Amendment, which contained key provisions on the definition of citizenship, the protection of civil rights, and the power of the federal government.

Birthright Citizenship

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. 14th Amendment, Section 1

From the nation’s founding, African Americans regarded themselves as citizens. When the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1788, it did not restrict citizenship based on race. However, it only counted enslaved people as 3/5ths of a person, rather than as full citizens, in state populations.

Dred Scott and Harriet Robinson Scott

Dred Scott and his wife, Harriet Robinson Scott, filed suits to claim their freedom while still enslaved, based on having lived in free territory. Dred Scott appealed his case to the United States Supreme Court, which denied his claim on the basis that he was not a citizen and had no right to sue in federal court. Delivering the opinion of the Supreme Court in the case of Dred Scott v. Sanford, 1857, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney wrote: “[slaves and their descendants] had for more than a century been regarded as beings of an inferior order ... they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.”

The U.S. Supreme Court declared in the case of Dred Scott v. Sanford that Black people, whether free or enslaved, were not citizens, but “a separate class of persons.” This decision protected the institution of slavery, which defined enslaved people as property, and supported discriminatory laws that

denied equal citizenship status to free Black people.

The citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment was specifically intended to repeal the Dred Scott decision. It established the principle of birthright citizenship, meaning a person born in the U.S. is automatically a citizen. This clause did not apply to Native Americans, however, who were not legally declared U.S. citizens until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Under the 14th Amendment, African Americans could now legally claim the same constitutional rights afforded to all American citizens.

Civil Rights, Due Process, and Equal Protection

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. 14th Amendment, Section 1

Protesting Black Codes

After the abolishment of slavery in 1865, southern states passed laws known as Black Codes, which restricted the civil rights of newly freed African Americans and forced them to work for their former enslavers. African Americans organized conventions across the South to protest the Black Codes and petition Congress for equal rights.

We simply desire that we shall be recognized as men; that we have no obstructions placed in our way; that the same laws which govern white men shall direct colored men; that we have the right of trial by a jury of our peers; that schools be opened or established for our children; that we be permitted to acquire homesteads for ourselves and children; that we be dealt with as others, in equity and justice. Address of the Colored State Convention to the People of the State of South Carolina, 1865

The State Convention of Colored People of South Carolina, held in Charleston in November 1865, issued a 54-foot-long petition signed by hundreds of men. The petitioners asked Congress to help them secure “our equal rights before the law” and “an equal voice with all loyal citizens.”

The 14th Amendment revoked the Black Codes by declaring that states could not pass laws that denied citizens their constitutional rights and freedoms, no person could be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process (fair treatment by the judicial system), and the law was to be equally applied to everyone. This represented a major shift in power between the states and the federal government. For the first time, civil rights were to be protected at the federal level, not left to the states.

Representation and Voting Rights

The 14th Amendment also included provisions relating to voting and representation in Congress. It amended the 3/5ths clause in the Constitution, stating that population counts would be based on the “whole number of persons” in a state—all people would be counted equally. It also protected the right to vote “for all male citizens age 21 or older,” though it would take another amendment to the Constitution (the 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870) to ban voting restrictions based on race. Women would not secure the right to vote until the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

Make Good the Promises Continued from Page 6

Reconstruction and the 14th Amendment

Congress passed the 14th Amendment on June 13, 1866, and sent it to the states to be ratified. But changing the Constitution to fulfill the promise of equality for African Americans would not be an easy process. Slavery, which defined Black people as property, not as citizens, had shaped the United States since its founding. In order for the 14th Amendment to become the new law of the land, it would need more than a ratification—it would need Reconstruction.

White Resistance

Twenty-two states ratified the 14th Amendment within a year after it was passed, out of a total of 28 needed to make the amendment part of the U.S. Constitution. But most southern states, led by the same white men who had passed the Black Codes, refused to ratify an amendment that defined African Americans as equal citizens. Black men and women who attempted to exercise their rights and freedoms faced resistance, violence, and retaliation from their fellow white citizens.

On May 1, 1866, mobs of white civilians and police attacked the Black community in Memphis, Tennessee. The first major outbreak of racial violence after the Civil War, the Memphis Massacre lasted three days and resulted in the deaths of 46 African Americans. National outrage over the incident helped fuel support for passage of the 14th Amendment.

I was going home to my mother’s, and when I had got to Brown avenue and De Soto streets, I met two men, one was a policeman, I do not know who the other was; the policeman shot me in the head ... After he shot me, he asked me if I was a soldier. I said no. He said it was a good thing I was not, and he then went along. Taylor Hunt, age 16 Testimony from Memphis Riots and Massacres,” House of Representatives Report No. 101, 39th Cong., 1st Sess., 1866

Opposition to the 14th Amendment was not limited to the South. In northern and western states, the Democratic Party appealed to white voters who opposed the idea of equal rights for African Americans. Three states—Ohio, Oregon, and New Jersey—that initially ratified the 14th Amendment rescinded their ratifications in 1868 after Democrats gained control of those state legislatures.

In January 1867, Ohio became the eighth state to ratify the 14th Amendment. But after Democrats won the state elections on a platform opposed to racial equality, they voted to rescind ratification in January 1868. Ohio did not formally re-ratify the 14th Amendment until 2003.

Reconstruction Acts

In 1867, Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts, which placed former Confederate states under military rule until they ratified the 14th Amendment and established new constitutions guaranteeing equal rights and protections to African Americans. The Reconstruction Acts also granted Black men in southern states the right to vote and hold elected office. Once African Americans were able to participate in the political process, the 14th Amendment gained the final votes it needed.

Limiting the 14th Amendment: Segregation and Unequal Protection

White supremacists opposed to Black equality and citizenship used violence, terror, and voter suppression to retake control of southern state governments. Efforts to combat southern racial violence lost momentum within the federal government and finally resulted in the withdrawal of federal troop protection of African Americans living in the South. Supreme Court rulings restricting and overturning 14th Amendment civil rights protections reinforced Southern efforts to restrict the rights of African Americans. Racial discrimination and segregation consequently characterized the day-to-day lives of African Americans.

Colfax Massacre and Cruikshank Decision

On April 13, 1873, white Democrats in Louisiana angry about their defeat in the election attacked Black Republicans gathered for a meeting at the Colfax Parish Courthouse in Louisiana. Approximately 150 African Americans were killed, forty of whom were executed after they surrendered.

In March 1876, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in United States v. Cruikshank overturned the convictions of the white men who attacked Black citizens in Colfax, Louisiana. The Court ruled that the 14th Amendment only applied to actions taken by the state, not to actions taken by individuals. As a consequence, none of the white attackers were punished for their role in the Colfax Massacre.

The 1876 Cruikshank ruling followed an earlier Supreme Court decision in the 1873 Slaughterhouse Cases, which allowed state legislatures to pass laws restricting citizenship rights, and further highlighted the decision by the Court not to protect the civil rights of African Americans. Southern legislatures soon passed discriminatory laws restricting access to voting and other rights of African Americans.

The Rise of Jim Crow

After the withdrawal of federal troops and the systematic removal of African Americans from political offices, southern legislatures wrote new state constitutions. The new constitutions made segregation and racial discrimination legal. These “Jim Crow” laws made African Americans second-class citizens no longer protected by the 14th Amendment. Consequently, lynching and other acts of intimidation increased in frequency while African Americans had no legal means of protecting themselves.

African Americans repeatedly challenged the emergence of segregation. They staged protests, brought claims to the courts, and produced publications highlighting and opposing the discrimination and violence they faced. They argued the passage of the 14th Amendment gave them the same civil rights and equal protection as any other citizens.

Ida B. Wells

In 1883, Ida B. Wells was working as a schoolteacher in Memphis, Tennessee, when a white conductor forced her off a train for refusing to move out of the first-class car. Citing her rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1875, Wells sued the railroad company for damages. The Circuit Court of Shelby County ruled in Wells’s favor, stating that she was “refused the first-class accommodations to which she was entitled under the law”; however, the Supreme Court of Tennessee later reversed

the decision on appeal. Wells went on to become a prominent journalist and civil rights activist whose campaign against lynching brought worldwide attention to racial violence and injustice in the Jim Crow South.

Homer Plessy

In 1892 Homer Plessy of New Orleans, Louisiana, volunteered to test the legality of railroad car segregation in that state. He sat in a “whites only” car, refused to move to a segregated car, was arrested, and sued in court. The case eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 1896 that segregation was legal as long as the accommodations were “separate but equal.”

The 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision further reinforced the rise of segregation. The Court rendered this decision despite the reality that separate areas provided for African Americans rarely were equal. John Marshall Harlan, the only dissenting justice, argued against the decision: “The arbitrary separation of citizens, on the basis of race ... is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the Constitution.”

Despite the refusal of the courts or politicians to support them, African Americans continued to challenge segregation and demand their equal rights under the Constitution. They pressed forward their fight in the belief that their

The lies that put our lives at risk

CAA 2024 gun control report: The alarming spread of gun violence disinformation in the Chinese-speaking community

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, gun ownership has increased among Asian Americans, a group that has had historically low levels of gun ownership and high support for gun control measures. At the same time, misinformation about gun violence circulates mostly unchecked on Chinese language social media.

Through Chinese for Affirmative Action’s (CAA, a SF-based civil rights organization) Chinese Digital Engagement program including PiYaoBa, a Chinese-language fact-checking site, CAA has documented 104 major pieces of pro-gun disinformation circulating on Chinese-language social media platforms. In total, these 104 pieces of gun disinformation have amassed over 2 million views. CAA has also identified over 100 right-wing Chinese-language accounts actively spreading disinformation and political propaganda about gun violence and other topics on WeChat, Twitter, Telegram, and YouTube.

The report covers a 23-month period, from January 2022 to December 2023, enumerating what the main disinformation narratives are in Chinese-language social media and where they spread.

Key disinformation narratives about guns on Chinese-language social media:

- Narrative 1: Banning guns is a step towards authoritarianism while gun ownership represents “democracy.”
- Narrative 2: Police in the U.S. are not obligated to protect people,

Does SSA need to pay you more?

On January 5, 2025, President Biden signed the Social Security Fairness Act (Act). The Act ended the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) which reduced or denied Social Security benefits for over 3.2 million people who retired from jobs not covered by Social Security (mostly government pensions). Primarily affected were teachers, firefighters and law enforcement and federal employees; many of these people worked under employment contracts negotiated for higher wages instead of contributing to the social security system.

This legislation culminates decades of lobbying to correct years of shorting retirees who could not collect their full social security benefits; this was justified with the government’s argument that receiving both would be double-dipping.

Seventy-two percent of state and local public employees work in a Social Security-covered employment where they pay Social Security taxes and are not affected by WEP or GPO. The Act does not change their retirement benefits.

The Act is particularly beneficial to those persons whose spouses had earned social security benefits but whose own government pensions prevented them from collecting from their spouses’ benefits. These people will now be receiving Social Security benefits earned by their spouses.

Others benefiting are those who themselves had 40+ quarters of social security contributions but retired with a government pension earned without social security contributions. They are receiving retroactive benefits and an increased monthly benefit.

Most beneficiaries of Biden’s Act have already seen their new benefits flowing – an one time catch up payment and an increase in monthly social security benefits. The catch-up payments (retroactive to January 2024) have been in the thousands of dollars being direct

Letters to the editor

... And if I have not said it enough, your work with Currents is invaluable to keeping this Central Valley APIA community informed and visible.
Maeley Tom

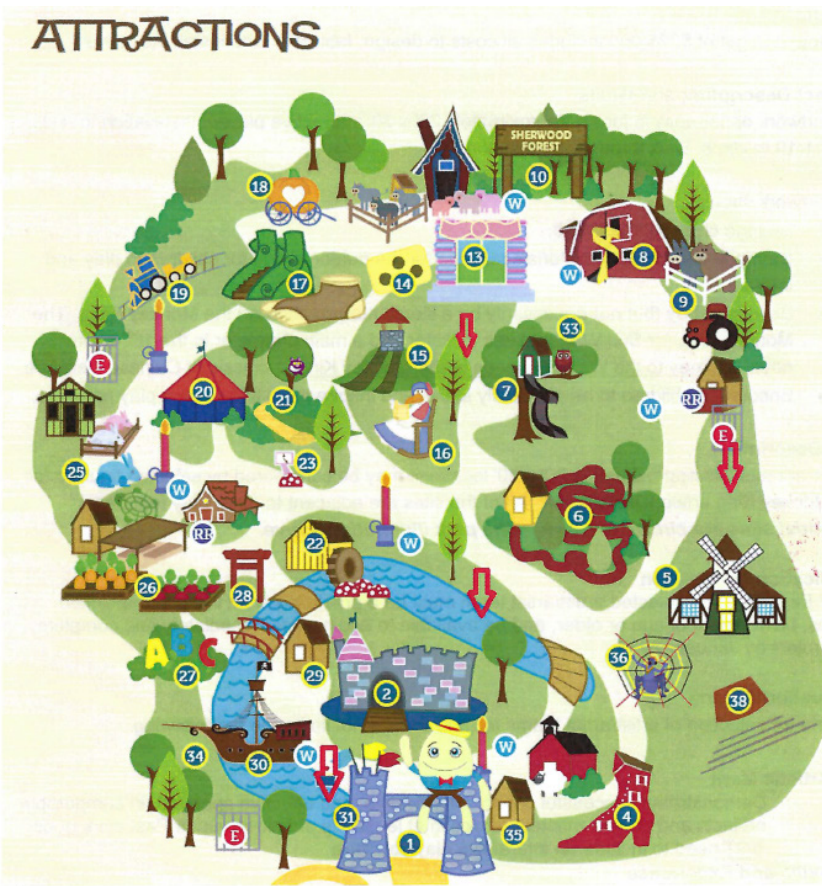
Please accept this donation for the Currents newspaper. Thank you.
Walter Menda.

Currents places

Okagesama (Stockton) is a new organization working on restoring and repurposing the WWII Stockton Assembly Center Hospital building on the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds. The group is advocating for a new interpretive center at the site and getting assistance from the Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages. A virtual gathering is planned for Saturday May 10th 11am-1230pm with panelists Tim Tabuchi, Allyson Aranda, Phillip Merlo. To join the webinar, register at <https://tinyurl.com/Okagesamade>.

Fairytale Town (Land Park Sacramento) has issued a Request for Qualifications with a **May 1st** deadline for proposals to build a 20’ X 30’ interactive climbing playset for kids ages 1-10. The \$325,000 project is to have a **MONKEY KING** theme. The structure has 4 possible locations in the Fairytale Town venue. Hopefully the Fairytale Town administration has done adequate outreach to assure that there will be AAPI input in this project.

The Monkey King is Sun Wukong, a literary and religious figure in Wu Cheng’en’s 16th century Chinese novel, Journey to the West. Sun Wukong was born from stone, acquires supernatural powers through Taoist practices, can transform into 72 different animals and objects, each strand of his hair has transformative powers, he can magically



manipulate wind, water and fire, has a short temper, impatience and proclivity towards anger, wears full warrior gear, rebels against heaven and is imprisoned under a mountain by the Buddha. He was freed from the mountain by a humble Buddhist monk Tang Sanzang who is traveling to India with holy texts to enlighten his countrymen; Sun Wukong served as Tang’s faithful bodyguard.

LA Chinese Massacre Memorial

The City of Los Angeles has awarded the 1871 Los Angeles Chinese Massacre memorial project to Artist Sze Tsung Nicolas Leong and writer Judy Chui-Hua Chung, both from LA. They were among the six finalists; more than 176 proposals had been submitted. The memorial will be installed along the 400 block of North Los Angeles Street near the Chinese American Museum.

The October 24, 1871 Massacre started when the police were trying to arrest an armed Chinese gang member, the officer was shot and a White farmer assisting the officer was

shot and died. A mob of 500 White and Latino Americans gathered, broke down doors, dragged Chinese outside. It was a period of intense anti-Chinese hate and violence.

Eighteen Chinese were killed, fifteen by hanging. At the time, there were 172 Chinese residing in the small Chinese community. Ten men were prosecuted with eight being convicted but all convictions were overturned because there was no evidence that anybody had died. In 1854 the California Supreme Court declared that Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants had no right to testify against white citizens.



Lawsuits filed against universities

On February 11th, Nan Zhong, a Chinese American father from Palo Alto, filed a lawsuit against UC because it rejected his son, Stanley, a child prodigy hired by Google at age 18. He is accusing the UC system and the US Department of Education of discrimination against Asian American applicants. Stanley’s application for admission was rejected by 16 colleges (MIT, Carnegie Mellon, Stanford, UCB, UCLA, UCSD, UCSB, UCD, Cal Poly SLO, Cornell, University of Illinois, University of Michigan, Georgia Tech, Caltech, University of Washington and University of Wisconsin. Stanley was offered admission by University of Texas and University of Maryland.

No lawyer would take Zhong’s case, so he used AI to file his suit. He may not even have “standing” as the harm was to his son and not to him personally. But Zhong disagrees and presses on because, as he puts it, he’s “really pissed off.”

Other new Affirmative Action lawsuits:

- On February 3, 2025, Students Against Racial Discrimination (SARD) filed a federal lawsuit against UC claiming racial discrimination in undergraduate admissions favor Black and Latino students over AAPI and white applicants. SARD, which organized in the fall of 2024, claims

that UC’s holistic admission system admits students with inferior academic credentials at the expense of better qualified ones. SARD leaders include Tim Groseclose of George Mason University and formerly with UCLA and Richard Sander of UCLA. Both have written books criticizing UC’s admission process.

- On April 1, 2025, the Equal Protection Project (EPP) filed a Civil Rights Complaint against the Pennsylvania College of Technology with the US Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights “for offering, administering, and promoting twelve (12) scholarships that discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, and/or sex in violation of Title VI and Title IX, respectively.” The scholarships targeted are offered to Penn Tech students and applicants for admission. EPP claims that “Penn Tech’s explicit race- and sex-based scholarships are presumptively invalid, and since there is no compelling government justification for such invidious discrimination, Penn Tech’s offering, promotion, and administration of these programs violates state and federal civil rights statutes and constitutional equal protection guarantees...”

Oligarchy is a form of government where power is held by a small group of individuals

Plutocracy specifically refers to a government controlled by the wealthy. In a plutocracy, the wealthy influence or control political decisions, often leading to policies that favor their interests.

The Oligarchs Want Their Throne Back—but They Can Be Stopped

By Thom Hartmann, The New Republic, Feb 5, 2025

Trump, Musk, and their billionaire and theocratic allies are following the example of tyrants everywhere. But it’s worth remembering they haven’t all succeeded.

The author of the Declaration of Independence went to great lengths, on numerous occasions (as I detail in What Would Jefferson Do?), to point out that when Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues started the United States of America, they were explicitly rejecting—in favor of democracy—the men (they were all men back then) who drove the “three historic tyrannies”: kings/autocrats, theocrats/popes, and morbidly rich oligarchs.

For 2,000 years before Jefferson, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Adams, and their colleagues created our checks and balances system of Republican democracy, every country in the world was ruled by one of those three. Today, of the 167 countries on earth, only 74 are democracies, and only 24 of those are “fully democratic.”

And now, because of the GOP, America stands on the verge of losing that status.

- Theocrats have seized control of our Supreme Court, gutting the rights of women and religious, racial, and gender minorities.
- Members of the House and Senate are so terrified of oligarchs funding primary challenges against them that it’s been over 40 years since any major legislation has passed fulfilling the

wishes of the majority of Americans. (Now, many say they are worried about physical violence against themselves and their families if they fight Donald Trump.)

- Today, our White House is occupied by a billionaire who believes himself to be a king.

Trump’s attack on our democracy is an old story, played out repeatedly in various countries by every generation during the past two centuries. It follows an absolutely predictable pattern, you could call it a playbook.

In a democracy, there are four main elements involved in governance: legislative, executive, judicial, and the press (the fourth estate).

While Democrats over the past 50 years or so have focused their efforts on winning elections (legislative and executive), the billionaires who own the GOP have directed their attention to using massive amounts of cash to seize control of the unelected branches (judiciary and press), a job that can be done with money, but doesn’t always require winning elections.

This is a pattern that’s been duplicated in multiple nations that have lost their democracies. Trump and Musk are simply following their instruction manual.

When Viktor Orbán took over Hungary in 2010, he first set out to seize control of the judiciary and the media. He lowered the retirement age for judges, immediately forcing out 57 justices whom

Currents Faces, New Places

NASA astronaut Jonny Kim blasted with 2 Russian Cosmonauts to the International Space Station in April. Kim, the first Korean American in space, is the son of Korean immigrants, graduated from UC San Diego, studied medicine at Harvard, became a Navy SEAL and then an astronaut. “Just to have a small contribution in that is really meaningful for me,” he said last month about his scheduled launch. He described himself as “a huge believer in public service.”

NCAA basketball champion Kaitlyn Chen helped University of Connecticut win its 12th national championship. Chen started and graduated from Princeton last year. Since the Ivy League does not allow 5th year players, the starting guard was recruited by UConn to play for them. She is expected to enter the WNBA draft.

1882 Foundation with the help of a Mellon Foundation grant plans to expand their Heritage Tour project. Five years ago, in collaboration with the US Forest Service, the DC-based non-profit encouraged people to visit Summit Tunnel Camp and explore the path of Chinese railroad workers from Auburn to Donner Pass. Railroad Heritage Sites now include: Bloomer Cut, Cape Horn Passage, Secret Town Fill, Summit Tunnel, Summit Camp & Central Shaft, China Wall and Tahoe Catfish Pond. The group is planning a dedication of Summit Tunnel Camp in July and a tour in September. The group welcomes suggestions other sites to develop. Contact 1882 Foundation at: info@1882foundation.org

Family of Krysta Tsukahara, a 19 year old college student, has filed a wrongful death lawsuit in Alameda County Superior Court for the November 27, 2024 midnight crash of a Tesla Cybertruck into a retaining wall and tree in Piedmont which killed Tsukahara, Soren Dixon, and Jack Nelson. They are suing the estate of the deceased driver Dixon (Tsukahara’s Piedmont High friend), the truck owner, and others as being legally responsible for her death. Jordan Miller was the only passenger who survived the crash and fire because he was pulled out through a window before the truck caught on fire. Dixon tested positive with a high blood alcohol level and cocaine. The group had been at a party and drinking. Carl Tsukahara, Krysta’s father, is suing to get find out why the truck caught fire, why her daughter could not get out, if the truck’s design caused it to be driven in a negligent manner and burn so fatally and other answers which have not been forthcoming. The family feels that someone is stonewalling with the truth.

Kaitai Liu, a UCD senior entomology major received the fourth annual Dr. Stephen Garczynski Undergraduate Research Scholarship from the Entomological Society of America- Pacific Branch. Garczynski was a research geneticist at USDA Agricultural Research Service in Wapato Washington with “an unmatched passion for mentoring undergraduate students in their research. Liu is a research scholar with UCD Research Scholar Program in Insect Biology which provides cutting-edge research and mentoring to promising undergraduates. He volunteers at the Bohart Museum of Entomology and Picnic Day bug events -“I love sharing my knowledge with the public and helping them appreciate insect diversity.”

Why conspiracies are so popular and what we can do to stop them

UC Berkeley Professor Timothy Tangherlini uses lessons from folklore and AI to understand how social media fuels the spread of conspiracies, and how we can use storytelling tools to stem the tide of misinformation

By Kara Manke , UC Berkeley News, February 5, 2025

Social media has removed some of the social “brakes” that prevent conspiracies and other misinformation from spreading, leading to a boom in their popularity.

Even in the face of overwhelming evidence, false narratives can be incredibly sticky. Many people insist that the earth is flat, that childhood vaccines cause autism, or that climate change is a hoax, despite ample scientific evidence to the contrary.

“Stories are very powerful,” said Timothy Tangherlini, a UC Berkeley professor in the Department of Scandinavian and the School of Information, director of the Graduate Folklore Program and associate director of the Berkeley Institute for Data Science.. “We’re much more comfortable with hearing stories that confirm our beliefs than ones that challenge them.”

Tangherlini sees narratives like these, and the many other conspiracies that are rife in today’s internet culture, as a type of modern-day folklore. As a computational folklorist, he uses AI tools to study how social media networks have accelerated the spread of conspiracies and false beliefs, and what, if anything, we can do to slow them down.

Following an election cycle dominated by conspiracies and hoaxes — from elites controlling the path of hurricanes, to 20 million missing votes for Kamala Harris and immigrants eating people’s pets — Tangherlini’s work is more relevant than ever. Berkeley News spoke with Tangherlini about why conspiratorial thinking has flourished in recent years and how we might spread stories of inclusion and truth that are powerful enough to stem the tide of false belief.

UCB News: What motivated you to study conspiracy theories through the lens of folklore and storytelling?

Tangherlini: I think of conspiracy theories as narrative constructs, as fictional. And they can be very powerful because they are stories. Narratives are very efficient at encapsulating norms, beliefs and values — and when we tell them over and over, they get pared down to the most efficient kernel of narrative weight.

These belief narratives — stories that we tell each other that we believe to be true — can influence belief, and these beliefs then create a feedback mechanism, so that once you’ve got a belief, it’s very hard to change it. You start to seek out narratives that confirm your beliefs.

I’m particularly fascinated by the fact that so many of these stories wind up being about outside threats. Often, it’s the Ghostbusters question: When ghosts appear in

the neighborhood, who are you going to call? Or, how are we going to deal with some sort of threat to the integrity of our community?

These threats can then force real world action, an example of which we saw with the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol attack. The question becomes: How do you interrupt these kinds of narratives when they start to have a significant impact on democratic institutions and civil society?

UCB News: We’re living in a world that seems rife with conspiracy theories. What is it about our current society that makes it so prone to conspiracies?

Tangherlini: We as humans tend to surround ourselves with people who have similar beliefs, and we also align our beliefs with the people around us. You might believe things, but you want to be part of the group, so you adjust your beliefs — you negotiate the boundaries of belief.

On social media, your idea that the people that you’re interacting with share your beliefs, values and norms may not apply — in part because many of them may actually be robots. Tangherlini

This process has been profoundly interrupted by the advent of social media. The groups that we interact with online are no longer the close, homogeneous groups that we are used to and were socialized in, so the social brakes that used to be there have come off, and the speed and directionality of messaging has changed magnitude — things can get out much faster.

People have also worked really hard to erode our trust in the media. We used to have newspapers of record, like the New York Times or the LA Times. You might not have agreed with their opinions, but you could trust the underlying reporting. Now there’s been a concerted effort to challenge the underlying reporting itself. And with the advent of generative AI, it’s also possible to generate not only audio recordings but also visual recordings — deep fakes — and newspaper articles that give the illusion of being true, but really aren’t.

As soon as you start losing confidence in your news sources, then you’re going to turn to these other narrative sources — those could be your friends, they could be your family, or they could be people who you think share your values on the internet.

UCB News: Could you talk a little bit more about these social brakes and how social media has interrupted them?

Tangherlini: We’re all part of groups in real life, even if they are just friend groups or families. When I start talking, my family will often shut me down because they know that I just talk too much, right? Or, if I was out with friends for tacos and beer and I said, “Well, did you hear what happened in Roswell?” my friends would respond, “Shut up, Tim.”

Those are the kinds of social brakes that we’re all familiar with. It can be as simple as that. But there are effectively no social brakes on social media. You might be interacting with people who just love to see a train wreck, and so they give you a thumbs up and away you go, off to the races.

And on social media, your idea that the people that you’re interacting with share your beliefs, values and norms may not apply, in part because many of them may actually be robots. I like to point out that no one sits down to pizza and beer with robots, but on social media, that’s what many of your engagements are. It’s very easy — shockingly easy — to create a bot army. It does not cost a whole lot of money. And that can influence behavior.

UCB News: Some recent conspiracies seem to be driven by actual problems in the world that are difficult or complicated to understand. For instance, rather than understanding that climate change is making hurricanes stronger, many people believe that elites are secretly manipulating the weather. What is it that makes these alternative stories so much more compelling than the truth?

Tangherlini: That’s a very good and hard question, and if I ever have the answer to it, I’m out of a job. But I think there are a couple of things at play. When you don’t have access to information or when you don’t trust the information that you do have access to, that will encourage you to turn to people who you do trust to understand what is going on. This is well established. And one of the things that we do to structure our understanding is to tell stories.

When you discount somebody’s concerns, you are no longer one of them. You are not part of their group. Tangherlini

Say I’m trying to figure out what’s going on with the climate. I trust my community, but my trust in other information sources has been eroded. Those information sources might be framed in a way that makes them hard to understand, or maybe they contradict my own personal experience. These kinds of things then promote anecdotes, and these anecdotes — particularly related to personal experiences — can trump the scientific papers that most of us don’t really have the training to read or understand.

I may not trust the global warming narrative because how could there possibly be global warming when it’s freezing cold today? Or, I may not trust the narrative that vaccines save lives because my daughter cried all night when she got her shots.

These kinds of anecdotal stories hold a lot of weight within a community, particularly when you’ve started to lose trust in other information sources. And it requires a pretty heavy lift to try and figure out how to create stories that resonate with the community.

UCB News: Are there any ways that scientists, politicians, journalists, etc., can nudge people back in the right

Why conspiracies

Continued from Page 10

direction?

Tangherlini: Often people have wanted to look at these (conspiratorial) threats and say, “Well, those aren’t really a threat.” But when you discount somebody’s concerns, you are no longer one of them. You are not part of their group. And so you then lose any kind of opportunity you have to engage in any potential positive strategies.

At this point, you are much more likely to pay attention to an anecdote from someone that you trust in your community than to something that’s coming from a government institution or a newspaper. Tangherlini

One option might be to propose alternate strategies for dealing with threats. So if people believe that immigrants are eating the dogs and cats in Springfield, Ohio, then there are a couple of things that you can do. You can take the strategy that was proposed in these narratives, which is to get the immigrants out of your community. Or you can say, “This is a problem in our community. People are going hungry. Let’s do things that mitigate hunger.” You could start flooding the market with stories that might actually appeal to other parts of this belief framework that everybody is walking around with in their head.

I’m working on a project right now with colleagues at Indiana University, Boston University and Stanford University that is trying to understand belief resonance and narrative. We’re trying to understand how a narrative resonates, how long it resonates and what impact it has. So for instance, if you hear a story as a kid, when you hear the story a little bit later, maybe as a young adult, you’re going to correct the story back to the way that you’ve heard it. And even if you don’t think that it has had a huge impact on your belief network, once you’ve heard something, you can’t unhear it — it’s going to be very hard to get you off that path.

UCB News: Are there ways that we can make stories of inclusion or scientific understanding as compelling as these threat narratives, so that they are able to take hold and spread, rather than conspiracies?

Tangherlini: I certainly hope so. Part of the research that we’re trying to do is to understand resonance: What sorts of stories resonate with different groups, and how can we interrupt stories that potentially have a negative outcome for everybody involved? If you know the storytelling of a community, you can start telling stories that will resonate with that community — for instance, you can tell stories that show how vaccines are actually very helpful to the community. But it may take a while to get uptake, and you might have to push out a whole bunch of different versions of stories before it becomes part of the cultural ideology of the group.

Extortion

18 US Code §872 Extortion by officers or employees of the US (federal law): *Whoever, being an officer, or employee of the United States or any department or agency thereof, or representing himself to be or assuming to act as such, under color or pretense of office or employment commits or attempts an act of extortion, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both; but if the amount so extorted or demanded does not exceed \$1,000, he shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.*

The problem is that President Trump is not an “officer” or “employee” of the US, but elected, and the law may not apply to him. The US Supreme Court’s 2024 ruling that a President has absolute immunity from criminal prosecution for actions within his conclusive and preclusive constitutional authority and there is no immunity for unofficial acts renders Trump even less accountable to the Constitution or America.

As of April 25th, Trump had deals with giant law firms who pledged to contribute \$940 million in pro bono legal work for Trump’s conservative causes. Trump began extorting legal services from major law firms by issuing executive orders targeting specific firms and freezing their security clearances; initially his vengeance was against firms which had employed or represented his critics. This behavior has been called retaliation, retribution, sanctions and vindictive.

The first firm to buckle under Trump’s pressure — Paul, Weiss — explained that \$40 million in free legal work is small compared to money, clients and top talent it could have lost if it fought Trump. Trump has extracted larger concessions from firms which acquiesced after the Paul, Weiss deal.

Four agreements came from firms being investigated by the Trump administration for their internal diversity policies and agreed to provide \$125 million of legal work on issues that both Trump and the firms support.

Three firms — Jenner & Block, WilmerHale, and Perkins Coie — have opted to fight Trump in court. Some firms like Covington and Arnold & Porter are filing amicus briefs in support of those firms seeking permanent injunctions against Trump. The president is using this retaliation to build his pro bono war chest. Many firms are keeping silent, hoping to avoid notice and out of the crosshairs.

On March 28th, two US judges temporarily blocked Trump’s executive orders targeting Jenner & Block and WilmerHale. US District Judge John Bates (Washington DC) blocked portions of the

It might be that we can use social network analysis to understand how social networks are put together and get endorsements from people who have centrality or status in a group. At this point, you are much more likely to pay attention to an anecdote from someone that you trust in your community than to something that’s coming from a government institution or a newspaper.

We have to understand community. We have to understand belief. And then we have to be very empathetic to those beliefs and try to understand how we can generate messages that resonate, that don’t insult people, but also help them get information that they just don’t have.

executive order that cancelled federal contracts held by Jenner & Block clients and restricted the firm’s access to federal buildings and officials and federal courthouses.

US District Judge Richard Leon (Washington DC), also on March 28, called Trump’s order retaliatory towards WilmerHale and blocked Trump’s attempt to restrict that firm’s access to US government buildings and officials. Leon did not block Trump’s order suspending security clearances

Value of pro bono services provided to Trump, by firm As of April 11, 2025	
Firm	Amount
Paul, Weiss	\$40m
Skadden Arps	\$100m
Wikle	\$100m
Milbank	\$100m
Latham & Watkins	\$125m
Simpson Thacher	\$125m
Kirkland & Ellis	\$125m
A & O Shearman	\$125m
Cadwalader	\$100m
Total	\$940m
Data: Axios research; Chart: Axios Visuals	

of all WilmerHale lawyers.

On March 12th, US District Judge Beryl Howell (Washington DC) temporarily blocked most of Trump’s executive order against Perkins Cole finding that the president’s actions were unconstitutional.

SF firm of Keker, Van Nest & Peters came out swinging after Trump’s attacks on lawyers:

Trump’s new Executive Order underscores how far removed this President, Attorney General and Administration are from our nation’s Constitution and bedrock values. Our liberties depend on lawyers’ willingness to represent unpopular people and caus, including in matters adverse to the Federal Government. An attack on lawyers who perform this work is inexcusable and despicable. Our profession owes every client zealous legal representation without fear of retribution, regardless of their political

affiliation or ability to pay. We encourage law firm leaders to sign on to an amicus effort in support of Perkins Coie’s challenge to the Administration’s executive order targeting the firm, and to resist the Administration’s erosion of the rule of law.

A coalition of bar associations filed amicus briefs (friend of the court arguments) in support of Perkins Coie stating in part:

... coercing lawyers to replace their loyalty to clients with loyalty to the President would deprive clients of effective and ethical legal representation. Without vigorous advocacy by lawyers independent of the executive, the judiciary is unable to fulfill its constitutional

Extortion

Continued from Page 11

role of checking unlawful action in our system of separated powers. It erodes the strength of our adversarial system and thus diminishes the proper functioning of the judiciary on which the rule of law itself depends.

[The executive order is an] assault on the independence of the legal profession [and an] attack on constitutional democracy and the rule of law. [Law firms] play a crucial role in preserving adversarial justice by litigating to assert legal rights and prevent abuses of government power. ... In our adversarial system, the truth is uncovered through close scrutiny of the facts and robust cross-examination. From there, the court reaches legal conclusions by a neutral and impartial evaluation of arguments the lawyers make in zealously representing their clients’ interests.

[The briefs further warn that undermining the bar’s independence] has historically been a key step on the road to authoritarianism.

The Order is not only blatantly illegal; it is a naked attempt to instill fear in the legal profession and intimidate lawyers into submission, thereby co-opting the bar to be subservient to the executive branch, undermining the judiciary’s ability to check executive power, and striking at the heart of the rule of law. The Court should grant Plaintiff’s (Perkins Coie) requested relief and enjoin this Executive Order to limit the chilling effects on the legal profession.

The lies that put our lives at risk

Continued from Page 7

thus owning guns is necessary for self-defense, especially in these times of rising anti-Asian hate.

- Narrative 3: The shooters in mass shootings are Black, people of color, or transgender, and are affiliated with Democrats.
- Narrative 4: The gun control policies of Democrats has led to increased crime and shootings.
- Narrative 5: Good guys with guns will stop bad guys from committing crimes.

Recommendations: As nearly half of all misinformation and disinformation about gun violence circulates on WeChat, this presents specific challenges. WeChat is a Chinese do-it-all app that is part of the everyday life of the majority of Chinese Americans. Due to its closed nature and censorship by the Chinese government, it is difficult to share accurate information on the app.

To holistically address Chinese-language disinformation, as well as increased marketing by the gun industry to Asian Americans, we propose the following recommendations:

- The government should establish offices that specifically address gun violence through a whole-of-government approach. These offices should ensure implementation of gun safety policies are linguistically and culturally competent.
- The gun violence prevention movement should invest in efforts to combat disinformation and misinformation within the Asian American and immigrant communities.
- Asian American community organizations should

But Harvard pushes back, says “NO’ to Trump

On April 28th, US District Court Judge Allison Burroughs set July 21th for oral arguments over Harvard’s lawsuit over Trump’s freeze of \$2.2 billion of federal research funding. Harvard filed the lawsuit one week earlier, days after the Trump administration announced it was cutting billions of dollars in grants following what the White House said was a breakdown in discussions over combating antisemitism on campus. Harvard did not ask the court to immediately restore the money, but wants an expedited ruling on the legality of the freeze. Trump has also threatened to rescind Harvard’s tax-exempt status and its eligibility to host foreign students. Trump wants US institutions to abandon any commitment to DEI programs, tighten up rules for campus protests and restrict who they admit and employ.

Trump says he is targeting other universities – including Cornell and Northwestern – and sent letters to 60 universities warning them of potential punishment if they fail “to protect Jewish students on campus.”

Harvard argues the Trump administration’s “attempt to coerce and control Harvard disregards ... fundamental First Amendment principles” and that Trump has violated an arcane 1946 law governing administrative policies. In particular, the Administrative Procedure Act “requires this Court to hold unlawful and set aside any final agency action that is ‘arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law,’” the

Harvard lawsuit says.

Harvard has hired two attorneys with deep Republican roots – William Burck served as special counsel to President George W Bush and helped the Paul Weiss firm negotiate with Trump; Robert Hur was appointed special counsel to investigate President Biden’s handling of classified documents.

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) was passed in the wake of World War II, as the government struggled to manage the expansion of federal agencies under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The APA does not require a hearing for every decision made by a government agency, but it does say agencies should not suddenly change procedures without reason. Harvard argues suspending federal medical and scientific research funding as a way to combat antisemitism doesn’t make sense and upends official procedures without warning. Additionally, Harvard said the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires the government give the

Under threat from Trump, Columbia University agrees to policy changes

By Jake Offenhartz, AP, March 21, 2025

NEW YORK (AP) — Columbia University agreed Friday to put its Middle East studies department under new supervision and overhaul its rules for protests and student discipline, acquiescing to an extraordinary ultimatum by the Trump administration to implement those and other changes or risk losing billions of dollars in federal funding.

As part of the sweeping reforms, the university will also adopt a new definition of antisemitism and expand “intellectual diversity” by staffing up its Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, according to a letter published Friday by the interim president, Katrina Armstrong.

The announcement drew immediate condemnation from some faculty and free speech groups, who accused the university of caving to President Donald Trump’s largely unprecedented intrusion upon the school’s academic freedom.

“Columbia’s capitulation endangers academic freedom and campus expression nationwide,” Donna Lieberman, the executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration pulled \$400 million in research grants and other funding over the university’s handling of protests against Israel’s military campaign in Gaza. As a precondition to restoring those funds — along with billions more in future grants — federal officials last week demanded the university immediately enact nine separate reforms to its academic and security policies.

Currents opportunity

AsAmNews-Asian American Journalist Assn (AAJA) Broadcast Task Force Summer Video Internship is available to a student enrolled in college in 2025 (winter, spring quarter) or graduating in May 2025. Applicants should be Interest in television news or digital video reporting. 15 week internship, 10 hrs/ week, \$3,500 for the entire internship. AsAmNews is a daily internet news site which is being archived by the Library of Congress. AAJA has 2000+ members dedicated to fair and accurate coverage of the AAPI community and the advancement of AAPI journalists. Deadline: May 30th. Info: info@asamnews.com

Follow-up: Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta

On April 12th in the California Museum, Locke Foundation Oral History Project and Prior Residents and Descendants Association premiered their new documentary, Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta to a standing room only audience. The film directed by Min Zhou and produced by Corliss Suen Lee featured Corliss Suen Lee, Harry Sen, Carol Lee, Nytee Chan Young, Ruth Chan Jane, Connie Chan Robinson, Daisy Oy Mah, Penny Lee Petersen, Constance (Connie) King, and Stuart Walthall. The documentary trailer is available on Youtube.

The documentary tells the stories of past and present Chinese women who shaped the Delta (mostly Locke and Walnut Grove) as their home. They have contributed to the rich Chinese American history of the Delta, but have been silent for too long. Most previous efforts to document the history of the rich agricultural area have focused on the men. Corliss Suen Lee sought to balance that.

A question arose during the program, “How did China-born women come into the US in light of anti-Chinese immigration laws?

- With US birth certificates purchased through an “agent” for a “paper daughter/son/wife/family (which belonged to a deceased person, person who had no intention to return to US, person who were convinced by the money to stay in China)
- Wife of a merchant
- Wife of a US citizen (very limited),
- Spouse of an American soldier (after 1945)
- A teacher
- A student
- A diplomat
- They passed the Page Act scrutiny test meant to stop prostitutes from being trafficked or otherwise immigrate into the US.

Immigration laws to keep Chinese women out:

1862 Act to Prohibit the “Coolie Trade” by American Citizens in American Vessels – A year before Abraham Lincoln delivered the Emancipation Proclamation (1-1-1863), he signed into law a bill preventing Chinese “coolies” – unfree laborers - from entering the US. Southern plantation owners had begun replacing their slave labor force with coolies from China and India. Chinese workers were an ideal replacement workforce for slaves because the planters believed them to be a racially distinct, cheap, and controllable labor force. The 1862 Act failed to curb the immigration of Chinese laborers because it was ineffective and unenforceable and it was impossible to systematically identify “coolies” from Chinese laborers under contract. But the conflation (merging) of unfree Chinese collies,

Chinese contract workers with African slaves and competition for jobs fueled anti-Chinese immigration campaigns. The law dictated that transporting ships would be seized and condemned and persons engaged in importing coolies would be arrested for a felony (\$2000 fine and 1 year prison), The term “coolie” originated from a South Indian language.

Burlingame Treaty of 1868 established friendly relations between the US and China. US granted China the “most favored nation” trading status. The treaty lifted any former restrictions in regards to emigration to the US from China. US wanted access to profitable trading opportunities, to spread Christianity, to encourage China to adopt Western diplomacy and governance practices. Citizens residing in the other’s country were granted privileges of citizens of that country except not the right to naturalization.

Page Act of 1875 was the first restrictive federal immigration law adopted “to end the danger of cheap Chinese labor (coolies) and immoral Chinese women (prostitutes)” and deny entry to persons convicted in their own country. Only the ban on females was effectively and heavily enforced and became a barrier for all East Asian women to immigrate, especially Chinese women.

The American consul in Hong Kong David H. Bailey from 1875 to 1877 was in charge of determining which Chinese women were actual wives who would be allowed to travel to the United States, as opposed to prostitutes. Bailey set up the process with the Hong Kong government and the Tung Wah Hospital Committee, an “association of the most prominent Chinese businessmen in Hong Kong” was retained to do a physical examination and report on the woman’s character. Before a Chinese woman could immigrate to the United States she had to submit “an official declaration of purpose in emigration and personal morality statement, accompanied by an application for clearance and a fee to the American Consul.” The day before boarding the ship to America, Chinese women reported to the American consul for a series of questioning, which included the following questions:

Have you entered into contract or agreement with any person or persons whomsoever, for a term of service, within the United States for lewd and immoral purposes? Do you wish of your own free and voluntary will to go to the United States? Do you go to the United States for the purposes of prostitution? Are you married or single? What are you going to the United States for? What is to be your occupation there? Have you lived in a house of prostitution in Hong Kong, Macao, or China? Have you engaged in prostitution in either of the above places? Are you a virtuous woman? Do you intend to live a virtuous life in the United States? Do you know that you are at liberty now to go to the United States,

or remain in your own country, and that you cannot be forced to go away from your home?

The women who “passed” these questions were then sent to be questioned by the harbor master on duty. The harbor master would ask the women the same questions in an effort to catch liars, but if the women were consistent in their answers they were allowed to board the steamer. Once on board the ship, the women were questioned again.

The first year (1876) that Bailey was assigned to enforce the Page Act, he did not yet have the assistance of the Tung Wah Hospital Committee and 173 women were allowed to sail to California. Bailey was disappointed with that figure and granted only 77 women passage in 1877. In 1878, under the authority of American consul Sheldon Loring, 354 women arrived in the US, a substantial larger number compared to John S. Mosby’s grant of less than 200 women travelling to the US from 1879-1882. Upon their arrival in San Francisco, Colonel Frederick Bee, an American appointed consul by the Chinese government (and early opponent of anti-Chinese sentiment) would verify with each woman her answers to the same questions posed in Hong Kong because if the women changed their answers, did not match their pictures, or had incomplete paperwork, they could be detained and sent back to Hong Kong. From 1875-1882 at least 100 and possibly several hundred women were returned to China. The entire process was “shaped by the larger, explicit assumption” that Chinese women, like Chinese men, were dishonest.

Photographs were used as a means to identify the Chinese women through each stage of the examination process in order to ensure that unqualified women would not be substituted for a woman who was properly questioned at any point in time. They were subject to this method of identification more than any other immigrant group because of the “threat of their sexuality to the United States.” In addition, there were also detailed questions about Chinese women’s fathers and husbands. The officials believed and “accepted that male intentions and actions were more likely to determine a woman’s sexual future than her own actions and intentions.” Chinese women had to demonstrate that they grew up in respectable families and that their husbands could afford to support them in the United States. “The appearance of the body and clothing supposedly offered a range of possible clues about inner character, on which some officials drew when trying to differentiate prostitutes from real wives” - bound feet, “prettiness, youth, demeanor,” and how they walked. The task of differentiating “real” wives from prostitutes was virtually impossible. All second- and third-class immigrants arriving in SF endured a physical examination. First-class immigrants were off-shored directly into SF without this interrogation.

Chinese Women

Continued from Page 13

By forcing Chinese women to undergo invasive examinations to prove they were not sex workers, the Page Act effectively prevented immigration to the US by Chinese women and resulted in a sharply skewed gender ratio in the Chinese American community. This gender imbalance lasted until the mid-20th century. [Source: Wikipedia]

Naturalization Act of 1790 – First law in the US limiting citizenship to “free white people” of good character who had resided in the US for at least 2 years.

14th Amendment (1868) was ratified and guaranteed US citizenship to anyone born in the US.

US is not alone; 33 countries provide automatic citizenship to persons born within their borders.

Naturalization Act of 1870 - After the Civil War, naturalization was extended to “aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent.” In baring Chinese immigrants from US citizenship, politicians had argued that the unworthy Chinese could not be trusted with the rights of American citizenship and lacked the “brain capacity” to comprehend self-governance.

Angell Treaty of 1880 (Treaty Regulating Immigration from China) By the end of the 1870’s US industrial leaders and politicians could not ignore the increasing anti-Chinese sentiment and violence. The Angell Treaty modified the Burlington Treaty to permit immigration of only teachers, students, merchants, or from curiosity, together with their body and household servants, and Chinese laborers who are now in the US, shall be allowed to go and come of their own free will and are accorded all rights given to citizens and subjects of the most favored nation.

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years and is the first significant law to restrict immigration based on nationality. The law made exceptions for diplomats, teachers, students, merchants and travelers. Those Chinese residents already in the US were denied the opportunity to become naturalized citizens. This Act was renewed in 1892 with the Geary Act and made permanent in 1902. The 1943 Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act repealed this Act and allowed 105 Chinese to enter each year. Chinese immigration increased significantly only with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 which abolished direct racial barriers and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which abolished the National Origins Formula (quotas).

Scott Act of 1888. Congress completely block immigration by Chinese manual laborers and allowed immigration only by higher-class Chinese merchants. Chinese laborers who had left the US were no longer allowed to re-enter the US under any circumstance. Ongoing litigation by laborers and merchants for the admission of their wives kept the immigration doors open for some Chinese wives. Ultimately the wives of Chinese merchants won and were allowed to enter the US; the wives of Chinese laborers were not allowed in. That distinction dissolved with the



Wong Kim Ark decision in which US citizenship was immediate regardless to the parents’ employment status.

US v. Wong Kim Ark (1898) – US Supreme Court ruled that a child born to non-citizen Chinese parents was a US citizen based upon his birth in the US.

1906 to 1924, an average of 150 Chinese wives were admitted each year (another estimate, from 1910-1924, 400 annually admitted)

Expatriation Act of 1907 stripped women of their citizenship upon marriage.

1920 US Census: 53,891 Chinese males, 7,748 Chinese females.

Emergency Quota Act of 1921, National Origins Formula – created to restrict large influx of Southern and Eastern Europeans thought to be undesirable. The National Origins Formula created a quota system that no more than 3 percent of the total number of immigrants from any specific country already living in the US in 1910 could migrate during any year. The Chinese population had already been artificially decimated by the 1882 Exclusion Act; the Act favored “desirable” western and northern European immigrants.

Cable Act of 1922, Married Women’s Independent Nationality Act – This law addressed the discriminatory law that determined married women’s citizenship according to that of their husbands and enabled white women to retain their US citizenship despite marriages to foreign men. This right did not, however, extend to women who married “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” especially Asian immigrant men.

Immigration Act of 1924 went into effect on July 1, 1924 which declared that no alien ineligible to citizenship shall enter the US; at a time, no Chinese could become a naturalized citizen. The 1924 act included an exception for the husband or wife of a US citizen, clearly applicable to Eastern and Southern European wives; whether this exception applied to Chinese wives was left to the courts to decide. The US Consulate in China gave the owner of the steamship “Lincoln” bad interpretation of the Act: Take those Chinese wives to SF. On July 22, 1924 the Lincoln arrived in SF with 9 Chinese wives who were young, newlywed and from rural Chinese villages. Some literate, some had bound feet, some married to noncitizen merchants, others married to US citizens. In 1925 in the cases of Chang Chan v. Nagle and Cheung Sum She v. Nagle, the US Supreme Court said noncitizen Chinese merchants could bring their wives over from China and the US citizens’

wives could not be admitted and should be deported (one left voluntarily, another was taken to SF to give birth; the others were detained on Angel Island for 4 months and then released on \$1000 bond pending their appeal.) The US Supreme Court’s decisions was contrary to its long history of giving privileges to citizens over non-citizens. Other Chinese wives of US citizens arriving in Massachusetts and Washington found judges who granted them admission into the US. The women became advocates for a narrowly tailored amendment to the 1924 Immigration Act passed by Congress in 1930 to permit entry by Chinese wife of an American citizen married prior to the Immigration Act of 1924. The numbers of Chinese wives entering the US plummeted after the 1924 Act.

1930 to 1941, about 60 Chinese wives were admitted annually.

Magnuson Act of 1943 repealed the Chinese Exclusion acts. This Act was spurred in part by China’s negotiated alliance with the US during WWII and China’s demand that its citizens be treated fairly. Chinese were finally allowed to become naturalized US citizens. The Chinese are the only group of citizens ever statutorily banned from naturalization.

War Brides Acts (1945, 1946) – These Acts allowed non-quota immigration by military spouses and fiances, mostly women and alien minor children of US citizens. The 1946 version extended non-quota status to Chinese spouses.

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) abolished the 1921 National Origins Formula quota system which established quota for each nationality based on the 1920 census; the program favored Northern and Western European immigrants because the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act had significantly reduced the Chinese population. It established a preference system based on family reunification and priority to skilled laborers and professionals.

Sources: “Vital Question of Self-Preservation: Chinese Wives, Merchants, and Americans Caught in the 1924 Immigration Act,” Shira Morag Levine (Stanford Journal of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, January 2013); Wikipedia

Arguments for Black reparations

On April 23, 2024, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) published its editorial opposing reparations, “Slavery Reparations in California.” That opinion piece starts:

Bad ideas never die. They go to California in the hope they’ll eventually become law, and the latest is reparations for slavery. The California Senate’s Judiciary Committee voted 8 to 1 this month to create the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency. This would be an agency to implement recommendations from the state’s task force on reparations. It would establish a Genealogy Office to determine who would be eligible for a reparations windfall.

WSJ boasts its mission as: “We speak for free markets and free people, the principles, if you will, marked in the watershed year of 1776 by Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence and Adam Smith’s “Wealth of Nations.” So over the past century and into the next, the Journal stands for free trade and sound money; against confiscatory taxation and the ukases (proclamation, edict) of kings and other collectivists; and for individual autonomy against dictators, bullies and even the tempers of momentary majorities.”

SF based attorney Don Tamaki was the only non-Black member of the 9-person California Black Reparations Task Force (AB3121), which issued its 1100 page California Reparations Report in June 2024 (available at <https://oag.ca.gov>).

The purpose of the task force was to (1) document the harm over the last 400 years, (2) recommend ways to educate the public of their findings, and (3) develop Reparations proposals. Tamaki has launched his education campaign to explain why Reparations are just and needed. Many of his presentations can be seen on Youtube. Tamaki is also in the core leadership of The Alliance for Reparations, Reconciliation and Truth, a multi-racial, multi-sector alliance advancing reparations in California.

Tamaka addressed WSJ’s arguments:

WSJ #1 *It’s too late ... reparations is only about slavery. It’s a bygone era and too late to do anything about. Slavery ended in 1865 and no African American slaves are alive today to receive reparations.*

- The lingering effects of slavery have created the huge wealth gap between White and Black households – whites have nine times more assets
- Blacks have life spans which are seven years shorter
- Black infant mortality rate in SF is five times that of White infants (2021)
- There are huge disparities in housing, health, criminal justice experiences of Blacks as compared to Whites
- Government has delayed cases “running out the clock” to get cases dismissed

- The harm of slavery has morphed over the past 150 years and its lingering and compounded effects continue today
- America is as segregated today as it was in the 1940s
- The US economy – the largest and most profitable in the world today - was built on 246 years of enslavement, 90 years of Jim Crow exclusion and racial terror and decades more of continuing discrimination resulting in today’s economic disparities
- In the US, 4 million people were enslaved and that did not end with the Civil War in 1865. The hierarchy was reinstated through laws and practices as close to slavery as possible.
- Cotton was the economic engine that powered the entire country and Black slave labor was essential. Every sector of White society benefited from, participated in, or was complicit with slavery, including almost every major Christian denomination, colleges and universities, plantation owners in the South, and Industrial industrialist banks, insurance companies and big and small businesses in the North.” America’s powerhouse economy would not be where it is today but for those 246 years of free slave labor.
- A 2013 analysis of federal records revealed that the government is still making monthly payments to relatives of Civil War veterans.
- Uplifting one group has positive ripple effects – “Rising tide raises all boats.”

WSJ #2 *It’s unwarranted. There is no reason for reparations. California was not even a slave state. Reparations is a handout for the undeserving. Racial discrimination has been outlawed. The playing field is level and color blind. If model minorities can achieve, why can’t Blacks succeed-it must be their fault.*



- 4 centuries of harms have compounded, cascaded and continued to have negative consequences and created huge group disparities which continue to exist
- Government policy shunted Black Americans into Redlined neighborhoods denying them

access to government loans

- Government provided White Americans with access to cheap home loans which ushered Whites into the middle class; Black Americans had no access to government home loans
- Government left Black neighborhoods bereft of resources, burdened those neighborhoods by zoning them for polluting industries, freeways and liquor stores, and then designating such neighborhoods as blighted to pave the way to take away Black owned property and creating wealth for others.
- Examples of individual Black success are few; huge group disparities persist
- We think of California as being an enlightened state, but when California entered the Union in 1850 as a non-slave state, it was plenty complicit when enslavers entering California brought their human property with them. The California constitution did not outlaw slavery. From 1852 to 1855 the California legislature passed fugitive slave laws, allowing persons escaping enslavement to be chased down and sent back to the South, even though they had been living in the “Free State” of California
- In 1850, California banned Black people from testifying against White people in court, including in Fugitive Slave Law cases. Two years later, the California Supreme Court likewise barred Chinese testimony against White people. The result, White people could commit crimes against Black and Chinese people with impunity.
- Jim Crow laws found its way into California. Democrats rose to power in 1867 by vowing to fight against any new law that would make Black, Indigenous or Chinese people equal to White people. At that time there were few Black people in the state, so hate groups mainly terrorized Chinese, and the law did not protect the Chinese. Between 1850 and 1935, 352 lynchings took place, including of eight Black Californians, but

mostly persons of Chinese, Indigenous and Mexican descent. White supremacy groups flourished in the west. By the 1920s, California became known as a strong Klan state, with

Arguments for Black reparations

Continued from Page 15

sizable chapters emerging in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, Fresno, Riverside, Sacramento, Anaheim and San Jose.

WSJ #3: *It’s too much, too expensive.* WSJ implied incorrectly here that Reparations is only about individual compensation, and therefore unaffordable, preposterous, fringy and an undeserved handout.

- WSJ’s “too expensive” argument is misleading or sensationalized. The Task Force was asked to make economic calculations of the harms suffered by Black Californians in the way of health care, housing, unjust property takings, educational opportunities; everyone knew the numbers would be huge.
- Calculating the economic harm is a first, not only in California, but anywhere in the nation. “No doubt the process of shining a light on the extent of economic damages has triggered sticker shock because the losses resulting from state sanctioned racial harms are enormous.”
- Example: if you just take the Fillmore District in San Francisco where 20,000 Black residents lost their homes, many never to become homeowners again, and almost 900 Black businesses destroyed under the guise of urban renewal which writer James Baldwin described as “negro removal,” that singular racially motivated property seizure/economic loss to the Black community easily soared into the billions of dollars. Ten years later, the city would likewise condemn and raise Japantown, reducing it from 44 blocks to just four.
- The Task Force economist estimated the actual damages for California’s role in the harm is in the billions of dollars, and they broke that amount down per individual. The Task Force did not recommend that the state should pay any specific amount. None of the Task Force’s 115 recommendations prioritize one form of repair over another. The Task Force never said that individual compensation is more important than, for example, reducing Black infant mortality.
- It is normal for society to repair for human or nature caused harms – COVID-19 vaccines, hospitalizations, income checks, lost lives, global warming, earthquakes – which all have enormous costs. Global warming has enormous costs, US assistance in Afghanistan \$3.2 trillion over 20 years is enormous.
- Remember the 1970s bumper sticker the teachers put on their cars to remind the public how important it is to financially support public schools. It read, “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”
- The Task Force’s 115 recommendations ranged from tuition, income tax, home loan, health care equity, educational opportunities and other forms of relief or assistance to level centuries of income disparity and limited opportunity to attain and hand down generational wealth.
- At the end of the Civil War, Congress ceded (took) land from wealthy southerners, intending to distribute 40 acres and a mule to each formerly enslaved person, to establish the means of self-sufficiency. In January of 1865, 400,000 acres from South Carolina and Florida along its coastal shores, were deeded to 40,000 formerly enslaved, who settled on and worked the land. But by April of 1865, a mere

four months later, Lincoln was assassinated, Vice President Andrew Johnson assumed the presidency, declaring “This is a country for White men and by God as long as I am president, it shall be a government for White men.” Johnson rescinded the Land Reparations program and ordered the Black settlers to leave their land. Land Reparations was scrapped to assure peace among the states, but added an incalculable long-term cost to formerly enslaved people.”

- To keep the former slaves from securing civil rights and progressing economically, states including California passed literacy tests, poll taxes and other devices to prevent Black Americans from voting. In 1867, Black turnout was 90% in Virginia. After Virginia passed voter suppression laws, Black voters dropped from 147,000 to just 21,000. Racial terror – lynching, violence, arson – was used to enforcing and normalizing the social order and was glorified and manifested across the country.
- To those who would say that Reparations are too much, it is also fair to ask, what is the cost to everyone of doing nothing?

WSJ #4: *What about other groups who experienced discrimination too. It’s unfair to single out Black people for reparations when others have suffered too.* Given the atrocities committed against indigenous people, this is a reasonable question.

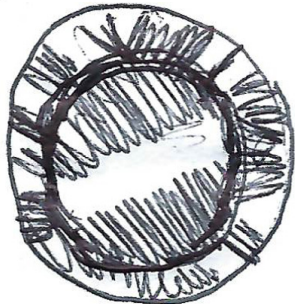
- Task Force was directed to focus on the legacies of centuries of slavery and anti-Black animus.
- The simple answer is that all state sanctioned harms should be acknowledged and repaired, and if it can’t be done at the same time, then it should be done serially and in due course. History has shown that justice achieved by one group can set the precedent providing justice to all groups, as in, a rising tide lifts all boats.
- In America, we usually don’t expect one repair to be delayed until another other repair is done. States suffering devastating wildfires, like California, don’t say until we are fully restored, there should be no funds for states experiencing devastating hurricanes.
- Most people understand that just because it may not be possible to repair all harms for all groups all at once, it should not stop us from doing the repairs that we can. It should not be an excuse to do nothing.
- Reparations provided to Japanese Americans, to descendants of the Rosewood Massacre, to 9-11 victims - the government did not delay repairs until restoration can be provided to all groups.
- Redlining maps of the 1930-1970 excluded Black Americans from getting federal insured home loans. “Between 1934 and 1962 the federal government had issued \$120 billion in home loans, 98% of which went to White people, White borrowers. This was just one of a number of huge transfers of wealth to White Americans. The federal government used the Homestead Act of 1862 to seized 160 million acres from Native American tribes and gave it away in 160 acre parcels free to White citizen homesteaders.
- Racial deed covenants - California was a leader in racial exclusionary policies. By 1940, 80% of the homes in Los Angeles contained racially restrictive deed covenants barring Black families

from living or owning in those neighborhoods. If they happen to move in, they were soon firebombed out.

- Commercial or industrial zoning and eminent domain allowed the construction of freeways through Black neighborhoods and were a popular technique to destroy Black American communities (homes and businesses), their property values, pollute their environment, threaten their health. “One study in 2007, between 1949 and 1973, there were 2,532 eminent domain projects in 992 cities nationwide resulting in a million people being displaced, two thirds of whom were Black.

#5: *It’s not my fault; we had nothing to do with slavery. I am not an enslaver and should not be made to pay for the harms perpetrated by long dead individuals.*

- We collectively pay for societal debts all the time, whether or not we personally did anything to cause those debts to be incurred, or if the harms were caused by humans or nature
- WSJ argued why should Chinese Americans whose great great grandparents suffered from Chinese Exclusion laws be asked to pay for what slavery did to Black Americans – this is pitting one group against another
- Reparations critics pander to this backlash, stoking economic anxieties, claims of unfairness, creating fears that money, opportunities and rights will be taken away from one group and redistributed as a windfall to the undeserving.
- Paying the debt of another generation is not unreasonable because each generation passes its debt or wealth to the next generation. The beneficiaries of wealth transfers will always have the better opportunities for advancement. “We all own this debt. It’s America’s debt.” State sanctioned harms are societal debts which require state sanctioned repair; we share this collective responsibility.
- Black Reparations is about fixing generations of exclusion and the resulting social harm.
- Major restoration programs are routinely undertaken by the government to respond to human caused wrongs or natural disasters like weather and fire disasters, global warming, public health crises, cash payments during the COVID-19 pandemic, coal miners suffering with Black lung disease, farmers with crop failures, workers from bankrupted companies, military veterans. The US gave the Afghan government \$2.3 trillion over 20 years. Reparations is no different.
- Tamaki says the repair must be meaningful and it is not just a Black issue.
- What are the goals of critics in opposing Reparations? (1) To establish the rhetorical architecture of the opposition. (2) To stymie any political momentum. (3) To scuttle Reparations proposals.
- Tamaki asks, “What is the cost of not making repairs?”



Currents crime blotter

Wonyoung Kim (35, Roseville) was arrested on February 13, 2025 and charged for lewd acts on child under 14, both with and without force on multiple children, in the Sacramento area. The investigation started in September 2024 by the Roseville Police Dept with an incident involving Kim (a paid youth group leader) and a minor at the Bayside Church, Roseville, exchanging awkward and inappropriate text messages. The church says that Kim passed their background check. The church told the child’s parents, filed a mandated report, reported to the police and removed Kim from any student contact. The



Sacramento County Sheriff’s Child Abuse Bureau was also investigating Kim for his contact with 2 other victims (ages 9, 10, female) who were both students at the Charles Peck Elementary School in Carmichael. Kim was employed there as a school counselor since August 2020 and had passed the school’s background check. The school district placed Kim on leave in September 2024.

In the past, Kim has worked at other schools in Southern California and at the **Sacramento Korean language and cultural school**. Law enforcement believes that there are more victims who have not reported yet. Law enforcement believes there are many other victims or community members with information relevant for this investigation. Parents are encouraged to have a talk with their kids – “Do you have anything that s/he wants to share with me that happened?” Do not interrogate the child, but listen to what they are willing to share. Let the child know they believe the child and will support for whatever happens and that the child did nothing wrong. Victims, parents and community members are encouraged to contact the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office at 916/874-5115 or 916/443-HELP.

Brandon Xiong (29) was sentenced to 400 years to life in prison on March 14, 2025 in Sacramento County Superior Court. On February 13, 2025 a jury convicted Xiong of multiple counts of forcible lewd acts upon a child, sex acts with a child under 10, and contacting a minor to commit a felony. There were 4 female victims, 5-10 years old, who came for sleepovers at Xiong’s house. The sex acts included sexual intercourse and sodomy. The victim of the last offense in October 2018 immediately disclosed to her mother and the investigation discovered other victims.

Harpreet Singh was arrested on April 17th in Sacramento by the FBI and Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO.) Entered US

illegally, used burner phones to evade capture. Suspected in grenade attack in India in 2024. The attack targeted Jalandhar SP jaskirat Singh Chahal and his family. In March Singh (Happy Passia) was charged by India’s National Investigation Agency, as well as Harwinder Singh Sandhu (Rinda) with 2 others, all members of the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) a terrorist group trying to create an independent state of Khalistan. On charges related to terror attacks in Punjab India.

Huanmei Xie, 43, Oakland, is described by the Davis Police as a “money mule.” She was arrested when she had been sent by scammers to collect money at the 82 year victim’s home. On April 10th, the victim received an email “from Wells Fargo” and was convinced by the scammers that she needed to hand over \$18,000 to get a new debit card, account, checkbooks and other financial services restored. The victim was told to withdraw the money, not tell anyone what it was for and later that day a “bank representative” dressed in sweatpants and a T-shirt arrived at her home and collected the cash. The scammers called the victim at least 10 times the next day saying they needed \$18,000 more. The victim told her caretaker, who reported it to the police. That Friday April 11th at 330pm, the police detective answered the front door and took Xie into custody. Hurray to the victim, her caretaker and the Davis Police for taking one scammer out of the loop!

Currents on crime prevention

Secured Steps, launched in June 2024 as a non-profit organization in Berkeley, is the brainchild of Florence Zhu, a UC Berkeley sophomore. Secured Steps provides intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention resources to college students. IPV is a form of domestic violence characterized as abuse between current or former romantic partners, while domestic violence can also involve family or other household members. According to the California Department of Public Health, around one in five women and one in seven men in the state have encountered physical violence from an intimate partner.

In her freshman year, Zhu’s friends were having dating violence encounters which were violent, physical or emotional. “That triggered a red flag in my head, this is a recurring issue that’s happening to so many people.” Reports of domestic violence and intimate partner violence among college students in California remain high, with 1,339 offenses reported in 2022, according to the US Department of Education’s Campus Safety and Security website.

Zhu noticed in social media, especially on university confession pages, many reports of domestic violence. University confession pages allow student to anonymously share experiences without fear of repercussion from college administrators or other authorities, especially when the students are not ready to report to a counselor, university health services or, even less, to campus or local police. These confession pages are usually hosted

on platforms like Reddit, Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, like “Calfession” on Instagram. Zhu felt that IPV was becoming so normalized (accepted) that victims were actually seeking relief and validation on social media.

Zhu gathered resources for those impacted by IPC and domestic Violence which includes emotional, physical, verbal and financial abuse. She looked at support systems on other campuses which had a response team but very little address prevention. She decided to create Secure Steps to provide information on how to end abuse relationships and seek legal assistance which she launched in June 2024. Secure Steps is partnering with National District Attorneys Assn, National Crime Victim Law Institute, and Law Help CA to development workshops, access to speakers and a podcast.

And push schools to comply with Title IX (civil rights law prohibits sex-based discrimination in education, i.e. women need to be equally safety when seeking an education) to budget for sexual violence resources. www.securestepsfoundation.org

Lafayette California Police have issued a warning about Mandarin-speaking persons identifying themselves as members of the Chinese Police. They claim that the person answering or a close family member will be arrested by Chinese authorities unless they transfer money. The scam involves many people to make it seem more credible. The Lafayette Police want people to know that the Chinese police have no jurisdiction in the US and cannot make arrests here.

Residents receiving such calls or encounter strangers at their front doors demanding money are urged to contact the Lafayette Police Department 925-284-5010.

From the Federal Trade Commission

Though the details might change, scams usually have some things in common. And knowing what they are can help you recognize — and then avoid — scams that come your way.

Scammers contact you unexpectedly. Don’t respond to unexpected calls, emails, texts, or social media messages that ask for money or personal information. If you’re not sure if a call or message is real, reach out to the business, organization, or person — even if they’re claiming to be a friend or relative — using contact information you looked up yourself and know to be true.

Scammers tell you to hurry. They don’t want you to have time to think or to check out their story. So slow down. Talk to someone you trust.

Scammers tell you to pay — and HOW to pay. Don’t pay anyone who contacts you out of the blue and insists you can only pay with cash, a gift card, a wire transfer, cryptocurrency, or a payment app. Scammers want you to pay these ways because once you do, it’s hard to track and hard to get your money back.

More on Trump’s attacks

Yunseo Chung, 21, a Korean American permanent resident who has lived in the US since she was 7 was the target of Homeland Security in March who wants to arrest the third year Columbia University student for “concerning conduct.” She had been arrested by NYPD during a pro-Hamas protest at Barnard College. Chung as of March 25th had not been arrested yet, but filed a lawsuit to stop the deportation. Homeland Security has gone to her home and dorm looking to arrest her on their administrative warrant. A federal judge has told ICE to stop their arrest effort. Her lawsuit’s next hearing is May 20th.

Chung’s advocacy included attending demonstration, posting fliers and participating in a sit-in at Columbia’s sister college Barnard. The university has determined that Chung has not violated any policy. The US Attorney’s office claims that the Secretary of State has revoked Chung’s green card.

Homeland Security has cited a seldom-used provision of immigration law that allows the secretary of state to remove a green card holder from the country if the secretary has reasonable grounds to believe that person’s presence or activities “would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences” for the US.

On April 11th, the government requested that the court dismiss Chung’s lawsuit. Joshua Colangelo-Bryan (contact: press@humanrightsfirst.org), one of Ms. Chung’s lawyers responded:

“The government claims Marco Rubio ‘personally determined’ that Yunseo’s ‘presence and activities would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences.’ Clearly, the Secretary has too much time on his hands if he is personally overseeing the hundreds of decisions to deport students for expressing their views.

“The government also claims that “there is simply no manageable standard on what constitutes ‘potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences,’ underscoring that the administration is just making things up as it goes after people whose ideas it doesn’t like.

“Finally, and amazingly, the government claims there will be no irreparable harm to Yunseo if she is locked up in a harsh, prison-like detention center. In fact, according to the government, that’s the best thing for her because, there, she could ‘submit evidence and legal authority as to whether she is properly included within the removability charge,’ which it says she is not allowed to do in federal court.

“In sum, the government has confirmed that it mobilized law enforcement to arrest and deport Yunseo just because it doesn’t like how she thinks, which is profoundly un-American and unconstitutional.”

Mahmoud Khalil – Khalil was arrested by ICE on March 8th in his apartment building after returning from an Iftar meal during Ramadan. Khalil is the pro-Palestinian activist and Columbia University graduate in the headlines. ICE told his wife that they had a warrant and were revoking his student visa; she informed them he didn’t need a visa because he was a permanent resident with a green card. ICE then told her that they were going to revoke his green card.

Homeland Security claims that they told Khalil that they had a warrant. This is a lie because Homeland Security later admitted that they created an administrative arrest warrant after his arrest at the time of his booking. Khalil asked to be permitted to contact his lawyer. Homeland Security has since claimed that ICE “had exigent (emergency) circumstances to conduct the warrantless arrest,” that Khalil would not cooperate and intended to leave the scene, and Khalil was a “flight risk and arrest was necessary.” Video footage shows Khalil cooperating and telling officers, “Yes, I’m coming with you.”

As of April 25, Khalil remains in custody in a Louisiana immigration detention facility.

Homeland Security argued in court documents submitted to the court on April 24th that it did not need to obtain a warrant before the arrest because immigration officers have the power to detain people where there is suspicion of “an offense against the United States. ... The HSI [Homeland Security Investigations] supervisory agent believed there was a flight risk and arrest was necessary ... The agents had reason to believe that the respondent was likely to escape before a warrant could be obtained.”

Is Khalil’s arrest and detention being orchestrated pursuant to Trump’s agenda to persecute those who speak against the president’s political agenda? Khalil’s attorneys report that while Khalil was still in federal facilities in downtown New York, “Mr. Khalil saw an agent approach (Homeland Security Special) Agent Hernandez and say, ‘the White House is requesting an update.’”

Pentagon white washes history - The Pentagon ordered all military services to, by February 26, 2025, remove any mentions that promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) including content on their website, photos, news articles and videos. In compliance with Trump’s Executive Order to delete diversity equity and inclusion (DEI), Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth who declared “DEI is dead” and the agency’s March 7 report identified over 26,000 images flagged for removal.

The report proposed to erase the accomplishments of the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat team – both highly decorated WWII Japanese American segregated units. Other DEI targets included the Tuskegee Airmen (segregated Black pilot unit), Enola Gay (the bomber which dropped the atom

bomb on Hiroshima; anyone with the surname “gay” was also slated for erasure), and Arlington National Cemetery’s identification of Black, Hispanic and female veterans buried there.

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) was livid when the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team webpages were taken down and demanded that Hegseth immediately restore all that history to the Army’s website. “Failing to do so erases the heroic legacy and heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the armed forces and dishonors their distinguished service.” The day after JACL protested, the Army restored its official 442nd website. On March 15, the army announced that it had republished the article highlighting the 100th and 442nd.

Under Hegseth’s directives anything with just the appearance of being DEI included the Navajo Code Talkers, Native American Ira Hayes, Major League Baseball Player Jackie Robinson, the Tuskegee Airmen, Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) were removed, only to be later reinstated.

The Pacific Citizen newspaper reached out to the Army regarding the changes to its website and received the following statement from Army spokesperson Christopher Surridge: “In accordance with a presidential executive order and guidance from the secretary of Defense, the Army recently took down the Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Heritage webpage that featured content about the 442nd Infantry Regiment and Nisei Soldiers. The Army is tirelessly working through content on that site and articles related to the 442nd Infantry Regiment and Nisei Soldiers will be republished to better align with current guidance.”

UCD law students uprooted - In February, the UCD Law Student Association (LSA) passed a resolution (16-10-20 endorsing the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights’ Boycott, Divestment, sanctions (BDS) movement to stop any use of student funds on businesses on the BDS boycott list. The BDS list included Burger King, Domino’s, Frito-Lay, McDonalds, Peet’s Coffee, PepsiCo, Starbucks, Taco Bell and Ruhstaller. The LSA also said it would not use student funds to finance events with Israeli university or firm speakers who have rescinded job offers to pro-Palestinian advocates. The LSA asked UCD to divest from companies who profit from Israel. Rather than just a statement of solidarity, the LSA actively prevents student funds from being spent on BDS companies or individuals linked to Israeli institutions.

The UCD administration says that the LSA resolution conflicts with AB2844 (2016) which prohibits economic discrimination targeting individual or business based on national origin. UCD warned the LSA and on March 24 suspended the student government and took control over the disbursement of LSA funds. UC has systemwide policies that require student governments to “provide financial and other tangible support for student activities and

Fight Trump’s attacks

Continued from Page 18

organizations on a viewpoint-neutral basis... in order to foster a sense of community and to further discussion among students of the broadest range of ideas.”

King Hall law students staged a walkout on April 2 in protest. CUNY Law Students for Justice in Palestine posted on Instagram that “Supporting BDS is a principled, necessary stand for justice, and we stand with you.” King Hall alumni were encouraged to withhold support for the school,

UC actions are protective, that is, to avoid bias lawsuits compounded the budget pressures resulting from Trump cancelling grants and research at institutions which Trump claims are illegally promoting “woke” diversity equity inclusion (DEI) programs. Trump has also started investigating 900 UC faculty as part of its antisemitism investigation.

Federal grants and contracts - US District Judge Adam Abelson (Maryland) blocked the Trump administration’s attempt to terminate federal grants and contracts relating to DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) programs and said that federal contractors and grant recipients cannot be required to certify that they did not engage in DEI-related work; the federal government could not freeze or terminate “equity-related” contracts or grants; the vague term “equity-related” permits arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement of government funding; would likely violate the First Amendment because they punish private organizations based on their views.

NSA museum - National Cryptologic Museum covered plaques in their museum which celebrated women and people of color who had served in the National Security Agency (NSA). The NSA intercepts overseas conversations and breaks foreign government codes. The dis-honored honorees were in the “Trailblazers in US Cryptologic History” and Hall of Honor exhibits. NSA retirees confronted the agency with their disgust. NDA Executive Director said that papering the exhibits was a mistake, there was absolutely never an intention to cover up parts of US history or disrespect anyone, her staff was just trying to implement the flood of Trump orders to remove any display considered DEI with some of the president’s orders coming with tight deadlines. The cover-up paper was removed days later.

Angel Island - Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AAISF)’s Institution of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant was cancelled by Trump’s March 2025 orders to dismantle IMLS and 6 other independent agencies. Trump’s new acting director Keith Sonderling says “I am committed to steering this organization in lockstep with this Administration to enhance efficiency and foster innovation ... We will revitalize IMLS and restore focus on patriotism, ensuring we preserve our country’s core values, promote American exceptionalism and cultivate

love of country in future generations.” The IMLS staff was placed on administrative leave. Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation’s IMLS grant to enhance exhibits was cancelled.

Trump’s order also cancels potential grant funding to create a national AAPI museum association which would have included AIISF, Japanese American National Museum, and 13 other institutions.

Organizations including AIISF and hundreds of other museums, libraries, and nonprofit organizations received an email from the National Endowment for the Humanities terminating our federal grant. The email stated that “your grant no longer effectuates the agency’s needs and priorities and conditions of the Grant Agreement and is subject to termination due to several reasonable causes, as outlined in 2CFR§200.340. NEH has reasonable cause to terminate your grant in light of the fact that the NEH is repurposing its funding allocations in a new direction in furtherance of the President’s agenda.” AIISF’s grant would have funded a two-year partnership between AIISF, Angel Island State Park, and the

Oligarchy

Continued from Page 9

he replaced with loyalists (an echo of Mitch McConnell’s stealing of two Supreme Court seats for Trump).

Then, following the strategy announced last week by Trump and new Federal Communications Commission Chair Brendan Carr, Orbán sued multiple independent media outlets and attacked the funding of Hungary’s public broadcasting system, shifting control of both into the hands of friendly oligarchs.

With dissenting voices silenced in the media and judges willing to overlook his blatant violations of Hungarian election laws (purging voters, gerrymandering, challenging the votes in opposition-friendly districts), Orbán has been able to win every election since.

Vladimir Putin followed a similar script a few years earlier; once he had control of the judiciary and Russia’s media, he was able to stomp all over the country’s new and fragile democratic institutions and intimidate the Russian Parliament (the Duma).

In Venezuela, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro followed a nearly identical script. As did Aleksandar Vučić in Serbia and Robert Viko in Slovakia.

And now Trump is trying the same; the GOP having seized control of the Supreme Court and much of the nation’s systems of elections.

He’s launched massive lawsuits against most of America’s major legacy media and his new FCC head has begun investigations of NPR and PBS for accepting “commercials.” Major media outlets are aggressively whitewashing his campaign against American democracy, while

NPR and PBS could be brought to heel by Carr’s efforts.

Once these steps are complete, and Trump, Musk, and their billionaire and theocratic allies are done gutting our government and cowing our media, it’s likely there will be no turning back.

Which is why Putin is so confident that Trump will destroy our traditional alliances and align the U.S. with Russia, once he’s fully consolidated his power. He told Russian media over the weekend that it wouldn’t be long before Trump was as powerful as himself: “And all of them, you will see—it will happen quickly, soon—they will all stand at the feet of the master and will wag their tails a little. Everything will fall into place.”

However, there are two countries of note—and possible examples for the U.S.—that tried to go down this path but had it interrupted, throwing them back into democracy: Poland and South Korea.

In Poland, Andrzej Duda’s Law and Justice Party failed to destroy the independent media, even though it succeeded in seizing the judiciary and rigged election rules in its favor. Because roughly 70 percent of Poland’s media stayed in independent hands, his party lost power in the 2023 elections, and Poland is now returning to democracy.

Similarly, in South Korea, right-wing President Yoon Suk Yeol tried to declare a state of emergency and outlaw his opposition, the Democratic Party of Korea, or DPK. He’d failed, however, to first seize control of South Korea’s independent media, so people showed up in the streets demanding his arrest; he sits in prison today.

This all highlights the importance of independent media, from old-line publications like The New Republic to new but blossoming upstarts like Substack, along with all of us fighting hard to protect the neutrality of NPR and PBS.

The American Revolution was an all-hands-on-deck affair, bringing together conservatives like Hamilton, liberals like Thomas Paine, military guys like Washington, and intellectuals like Jefferson and Adams.

The Lincoln Project and other Never Trump movements show the commitment of true conservatives to democracy. Increasingly, liberals, military, law enforcement people, and intellectuals across the spectrum are joining the effort to salvage and then revive our republic. We are this generation’s minutemen.

We’ve done this before; we can do it again. It’s going to take a hell of a fight, though, given that we’re up against the richest men on the planet. But as long as we have an independent media and a fierce dedication to freedom, it’s not too late.

Calendar

Thru May 10 **Play: “Where the Mountain Meets the Moon” by Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra.**
A magical, mystical, charming and lavish production with a 18 member cast. 7pm at Nevada Theatre (401 Broad St, Nevada City). Tickets: <https://catsweb.org>

May 1 Thu **Asian American Stories Award Ceremony 2025 and Video Contest: “My Gift To America.”**
6pm at HL Peninsula Restaurant (136 Ranch Dr, Milpitas). Tickets/info: www.aastories.org

May 2 Fri **Sacramento Asian Pacific Film Festival with Nichi Bei Foundation.** 5pm at The Sofia (2700 Capitol Ave Sac). Films: Hito Hata: Raise the Banner (new 4K video version); 1970s: The Fight for Little Tokyo. Q+A with director Duane Kubo (Little Tokyo). Info: Gloria Imagine 916/427-8447.

May 3, 1983 THONG HY HUYNH was stabbed by classmate James Pierman and died on the Davis High School campus. Pierman was tried as an adult, convicted of voluntary manslaughter, and sentenced to 6 years in prison.

May 3-4 **10th Annual Davis Cherry Blossom Festival.** 11am–9pm (11am-7pm, Sunday) at Sudwerks (2001 2nd St, Davis). Free. 2025 Charity: Manzanar Baseball Project. In 2024, 13 Taiko groups performed!

May 7 Wed **AsAmNews virtual presentation: Asian Americans: The Most Litigious and Civil Disobedient Americans.** 5pm. Speaker David Lei of the Chinese Historical Society of America will discuss the major litigated cases involving AAPIs that changed the course of civil rights. Register at: www.asamnews.com

May 8-11 **43rd CAAM Fest** will feature 40 films. Documentaries include: Third Act, Because of You: A History of Kilawin Kolektibo, The Lens of Tamio Wakayama, Chinatown Cha-Cha, Love, Chaos, Kin; Made in Ethiopia, Making Waves, Mistress Dispeller, New Wave, Palestinian Landscapes, Slumlord Millionaire, Standing Above the Clouds, Te Puna Ora (The Source of Life), The Grocery List Show, To be Continued, What About China, Year of the Cat, Centerpiece: Your Touch Makes Others Invisible. Tickets: CAAMFest.com.

May 10 Sat **Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival.** 11am-4pm on Main St. Locke. Free admission and parking. Lion dance, cultural performances, Taiko Drums, Food, vendor booths, arts and crafts, music. Families and children welcome. Info: 916/776-1684

May 10 Sat **Okagesama planning meeting for a Stockton Assembly Center historic site.** Panelists Tim Tabuchi, Allyson Aranda, Phillip Merlo. Register for the webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/Okagesamade>.

May 10 Sat **Okagesame** webinar to organize support for a Japanese American Interpretive Center at the San Joaquin Fairgrounds/Stockton Assembly Center hospital site. 11am-1230pm. Register at <https://>

tinyurl.com/Okagesamade

May 10 Sat **Vacaville Multicultural Festival.** 1-5pm at Andrew Park (614 E. Monte Vista Ave, Vacaville.) Celebrate AAPI Heritage Month at a festival.

May 14 Wed **APSEA Career Development Program CDP: Jean Shiimoto on “Mentoring and Volunteering Can Promote Your Success and the Success of Others.”** Noon to 1pm. Free to APSEA and ACSED members, \$5 to others. Register: <https://www.acsedonline.org/may-workshop-2025>

May 17 Sat **Free Chol So Lee** documentary showing and panel with Sacramento activists. At Demo Art & Books (2211 16th St, Sac.)

May 17 Sat **Honor, Recognition & Respect 48 Star Flag Gifting Ceremony.** 11am-noon at California Museum (10th X O St, Sac). Judge Johnny Gogo have been inviting survivors of WWII Japanese American concentration camps to sign 48 Star Flags. Other flags have been donated to JANM, JA Museum of San Jose, Korematsu Institute. Flag #5 is being donated to the California Museum. RSVP: rsvp@californiamuseum.org

May 22 Thu **Organization of Chinese American (OCA) Sacramento’s 30th Anniversary Dragon Boat Festival.** Info: www.ocasacramento.org



May 29 Thu **Still Standing Guard: Hannan Parra** (“Two Days and One Suitcase”) and **Mr. Tanimoto** (“Stories of the Protectors.”) A Time of Remembrance Event, 7pm at Blue Goose Event Center (3550 Taylor Rd, Loomis.) Suggested donation: \$10/person.

May 29 Thu **The March Fong Eu Story, An Authorized Biography of An Unauthorized Woman** book event hosted by the Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles. 630pm at Pico House (424 N. Main St, LA). Free. Register: camla.org/marchfongeu.

June 2,3, 4 **Berkeley Historical Society and Museum hosts Ireichō Book of Names** by appointment only. The Ireichō, a sacred monument containing the first comprehensive listing of over 125,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated in US Army, Department of Justice, Wartime Civil Control Administration, and War Relocation Authority camps during WWII. After almost two years being hosted by the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, it is now on national tour. Survivors and descendants are invited to mark one or more names in the Ireichō with a blue hanko stamp (provided at the museum). 1931 Center St, Berkeley 510-848-0181. To make an appointment to stamp go to www.ireizo.org (find “tour,” scroll locations to “SF Bay Area” and click on the red “register” button to make an appointment.

June 19, 1982 VINCENT CHIN was beaten to death with a baseball bat in Detroit by Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz, both laid off autoworkers blaming Asians for their unemployment. They entered manslaughter pleas with probation, \$3,700 fines and no jail time was ordered by the judge who claims these light consequences for this murder were appropriate given their “backgrounds.” The AAPI community was outraged and protested the outcome.

July TBA **1882 Foundation’s Summit Tunnel Camp Dedication.** A 2-day event starting in Sacramento’s Chinatown and including a visit to the railroad camp. Info: info@1882foundation.org.

July 13 Sun **Jan Ken Po Gakko’s 50th Anniversary Celebration.** 4-6pm at Sac. Japanese United Methodist Church (6929 Franklin Blvd, Sac). Jan Ken Po Gakko is the first Japanese cultural school in California. \$25/person, includes Bento from Fuji Sacramento. Info: www.jankenpogakko.com

Sept 13-14 **1882 Foundation’s Heritage Tour of the Summit Tunnel.** A guided tour through the Summit Tunnel and former railroad Chinatowns of Truckee and Auburn. Info: info@1882foundation.org

Oct 9 Thu **APSEA 50th Anniversary Celebration.** 6pm at Asian Pearl Restaurant (6921 Stockton Blvd, Sac). Keynote: Mona Pasquil Rogers. Sponsorships available: Award sponsor \$2000, Table sponsor \$888, Full page ad sponsor \$400, half page ad sponsor \$250. Individual tickets \$88. Sponsorship deadline- August 31. Info: president.apsea@gmail.com

You have constitutional rights:

- **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR** if an immigration agent is knocking on the door.
- **DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS** from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.
- **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING** without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- If you are outside of your home, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.
- **GIVE THIS CARD TO THE AGENT.** If you are inside of your home, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door.

I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.

I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

These cards are available to citizens and noncitizens alike.

